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REMINISCENCES

OF

SCOTTISH LIFE AND CHARACTER.

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REMINISCENCES

OF

SCOTTISH LIFE AND CHARACTER

BY

E. B. RAMSAY, M.A., F.R.S.E.

DEAN OF EDINBURGH.

Third Edition, much Enlarged.

EDINBURGH:

EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS.

1859.

To the Most Honourable

JAMES ANDREW MARQUIS OF DALHOUSIE,

K.T., P.C., &c. &c.

—ooo—

My Dear Lord Dalhousie,

I beg permission to dedicate to you the third edition of a work which has grown upon my hands to many times the size of the original lecture with which it commenced. I am quite conscious that the only claim which my book can have either to the notice of my countrymen, or to any share of attention from your Lordship, consists in this—that it is out and out a Scottish book. It is conversant with a species of anecdotes which are peculiar to Scotland — with a species of humour exclusively Scottish. The object is to fix and preserve a page of our domestic national annals which, in the eyes of the rising generation, is fast fading into oblivion.

I am happy to take any opportunity of acknowledging that the long friendship of one so able, so high minded, and so illustrious, as the Marquis of Dalhousie, has been amongst the most honourable and gratifying incidents of a life not now a short one. But my present purpose is rather to present my book to a Scottish nobleman who has a full relish for a Scottish story, and this taste, in yourself, I know to be a hereditary one, for your distinguished father, the late Earl of Dalhousie, was a thorough Scotchman, and in regard to such anecdotes as those which I have endeavoured to collect, we may say of him (to borrow a homely expression from the worthy Bailie Nicol Jarvie), that "he liket ane o' them weel, honest man!"

I am,

With much respect and regard,

Your Lordship's affectionate friend,

E. B. RAMSAY.

AINSLIE PLACE, EDINBURGH,
June 1859.

PREFACE.

THE present edition of "Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character," might, in fact, almost have been issued as a new work, so much are the former materials enlarged by the introduction of fresh anecdotes, kindly contributed from various quarters, by the account of Scottish proverbs, and by other additions. The field of inquiry for such reminiscences is very extensive, and I am convinced is far from being yet exhausted. But I fear the labourers are growing few. We are constantly hearing of the death of some person who, it is said, was possessed of a rich store of original Scottish anecdotes, which have not been

recorded. In calling the attention of my countrymen to their native Scottish dialect, to its force and humour, I ought to remind them of a difficulty that belongs to the subject, in the uncertainty which hangs over the right *spelling*. There is no uniform rule or practice for our guidance, but we have followed Scottish writers of the best authority. Kelly's work on Proverbs is of the highest authority as to Scottish phraseology, and he has evidently been himself careful in the matter of spelling, but he does not seem to have been equally careful to correct the proof-sheets, and consequently there are many typographical errata in his work. I am desirous of taking this opportunity of expressing my obligations for the valuable and judicious assistance I have received from Mr. David Douglas, of the firm of Edmonston and Douglas, publishers. His accurate knowledge of Scotch has been most serviceable in correcting the press, especially in the quotations from the older writers on Scottish proverbs. I think the best

mode of obtaining an accurate and full knowledge of the Scottish words and phrases, which constitute the pure Scottish dialect, familiar to the older generation, would be to study the edition of Jamieson's Dictionary, to which I have referred in page 104. The student will find all Scottish words recorded with their meaning, and he will generally find, also, explanations, by which the different *shades* of meaning are further developed and illustrated.

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Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character.

THERE are many things connected with our Scottish manners of former times which are fast becoming obsolete. We seem at present to be placed in a juncture when some Scottish traditions may be lost entirely, if not preserved. Twice I have essayed to record certain "Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character," and have found the experiment most favourably received by my countrymen. The materials have grown under my hand; and I have received contributions from various quarters for a new edition; still I had hardly anticipated that a fresh supply of the Reminiscences would have been so soon called for.

I have, however, endeavoured to meet the demand by a third issue of these traditions, in which many additional anecdotes will be found, and some specimens of Scottish PROVERBS, with remarks upon their use and meaning. I cannot but feel gratified that the public should so far have corroborated the opinion which I entertain regarding this phase of our Scottish peculiarities. I still think that it forms a most interesting chapter of our domestic national annals. In fact, if it were not presumption, I might be inclined to consider myself a fellow-labourer with Mr. Robert Chambers; as in a very humble degree, and a very limited sphere, this little volume takes a portion of the same field of illustration which he has selected. I should consider myself to have done well if I shall direct any of my readers to his able volumes. Whosoever wishes to know what this country really has been in times past, and to learn with a precision beyond what is supplied by the narratives of history, the details of the ordinary current of our social, civil, and national life, must carefully study the "Domestic Annals of Scotland." Never

before were a nation's domestic features so thoroughly portrayed. Of these features the specimens of quaint Scottish humour still remembered are unlike anything else, but they are fast becoming obsolete, and my motive for this publication has been an endeavour to preserve marks of the past, which would of themselves soon become obliterated, and to supply the rising generation with pictures of social life, faded and indistinct to their eyes, but the strong lines of which an older race still remember. By thus coming forward at a favourable moment, no doubt many beautiful specimens of SCOTTISH MINSTRELSY have in this manner been preserved from oblivion by the timely exertions of Bishop Percy, Ritson, Walter Scott, and Professor Aytoun.

My esteemed friend Lord Neaves, who, it is well known, combines, with his great legal knowledge and high literary acquirements, a keen sense of the humorous, has sometimes pleasantly complained of my drawing so many of my specimens of Scottish humour from sayings and doings of Scottish ministers. There can be no doubt that

the older school of our national clergy supply some most amusing anecdotes. They were a shrewd and observant race. They lived amongst their own people from year to year, and knew well the Scottish type of character. Their retired habits and familiar intercourse with their parishioners, gave rise to many quaint and racy communications. They were excellent men, and well suited to their pastoral work, and did much good amongst the people; for it should be always remembered that a national church requires a sympathy and resemblance between the pastors and the flocks. Both will be found to change together. Nothing could be further from my mind in recording these stories, than the idea of casting ridicule upon such an order of men. My own feelings as a Scotchman, with all their ancestral associations, lead me to cherish their memory with pride and deep interest. I may appeal also to the fact that amongst my contributions to this volume, several are from known and distinguished clergymen of the Church of Scotland. Indeed, no persons enjoy these stories more than ministers

themselves. I recollect many years ago, travelling to Perth in the old stage-coach days, and enjoying the society of a Scotch clergyman, who was a most amusing companion, and full of stories, the quaint humour of which accorded with his own disposition. When we had come through Glen Farg, my companion pointed out that we were in the parish of Dron. With much humour he introduced a mention of a brother minister not of a brilliant order of mind, who had commenced here a course of appointments in the Church, the names of which, at least, were of an ominous character for a person of unimaginative temperament. The worthy man had begun his ministerial career as assistant of Dron. He then held the living of Dull, a parish near Aberfeldy, in the Presbytery of Weem, and had ended his days and his clerical career as minister of Dunse in Berwickshire.

Sir Walter Scott, in the dedication to the King (George the Fourth) of his collected edition of the Waverley novels, views with much complacency the fact that "the perusal of them has been supposed in some instances to have succeeded

in amusing hours of relaxation, or relieving those of languor, pain, or anxiety." No doubt it is a source of allowable satisfaction to an author to think that he has in any degree, even the lowest and most humble, contributed to the innocent recreation of a world where sorrow and distress so generally prevail. The preparation of this edition has sometimes succeeded in drawing off the mind of the author from sad and painful recollections of his own domestic trials, and he may perhaps be permitted to state that in several cases he has received assurance that these pages have beguiled an hour of languor and debility; that they have recalled many pleasant associations with the past, and have given a permanent and agreeable impression of a pleasantry and humour exclusively and essentially of a Scottish type and character.

I wish it to be distinctly understood that these desultory records were never intended to treat of the changes which have taken place in our country during the last half century, in literature or philosophy, in laws, commerce, manufactures, or in

the deeper phases of our national character. I treat of changes and of transitions which lie rather upon the surface of social life. In fact, I speak of what, to a great degree, I can verify from my own experience, and what I have not seen and known in my own person I generally narrate from the direct testimony of others. I can myself go back in memory for fifty years; and therefore these observations, trivial and superficial as they may be, I might name, in imitation of my distinguished great-great-uncle, Bishop Burnett, and call them "Memoirs of my own Time," or, more correctly, and following a more recent example of collected reminiscences (that of the late lamented Lord Cockburn), "Memorials of my Time." I have recorded the remarks following in the way of an *experiment*, hoping that it might form a precedent or example for others to take up the question of changes amongst us, and for those to state results of their observation who have had far more experience than I have (as I was only an occasional visitor to my own country from the age of eight to the age of thirty), who have more

opportunities of judging, and who are possessed of far better powers of description. As Lord Cockburn has observed, "A change has been going on for a long time." "The feelings and habits which had prevailed at the union, and which had left so many picturesque peculiarities on the Scottish character, could not survive the enlarged intercourse with England and the world." Much of this change had of course taken place before any of the present generation can remember. Much has been done in my own recollection, and now there remains only comparatively the slighter shades of difference to be assimilated, and soon there will be little to notice. Now, a subject like this can only be illustrated by a copious application of anecdotes which must show the features of the past. And let me premise that I make use of anecdotes, not for the purpose of telling a good story, but solely in the way of *illustration*. I shall not hesitate to bring forward the most hackneyed old stories if they serve this purpose. Neither shall I have any delicacy in bringing forward anecdotes drawn from my own knowledge,

or any scruple in making use of sayings and doings which may come from my own nearest relatives, from the dearest and most valued of friends. If these anecdotes should occasionally excite amusement or even laughter, there is no harm done; but let it be remembered this is not the *object*. The object, as I say, is to show the changes referred to. Whatever, in short, illustrates our changes and marks the times that are gone, I shall not hesitate to use. If it come from a friend, it will not be less acceptable, nor shall I have any compunction in adopting it, as I trust I shall not have to make use of any anecdotes which I should be unwilling those friends themselves should hear repeated.

We have now, therefore, to deal with common events and with changes which, though in themselves often deep and important, yet appear to the observer to effect only what is external; and as we must have some classification or arrangement of the subjects on which these changes are to be marked, I would propose to record some reminiscences on the following subjects :

I. On religious feelings and religious observances.

II. On old Scottish conviviality.

III. On the old Scottish domestic servant.

IV. On Scottish language, including Scottish proverbs.

V. On Scottish stories of wit and humour.

I. On such a subject as our first head, I wish to speak with deference and circumspection. This is not a fitting occasion for entering upon the question of national religious feeling, or of the modifications which have taken place in the public mind on its great and important questions. It is impossible, however, to overlook entirely the fact of a gradual softening and relaxation which has been going on for some years, of the stern rigours of the Calvinistic school of theology. At any rate, its theoretic peculiarities are certainly kept in the background. What we have to notice, however, are those changes in the feelings with regard to religion and religious observances, which have appeared upon the exterior of society—the changes

which belong to outward habits rather than to internal feelings. Of such changes many have taken place within my own experience. Scotland has ever borne the character of a moral and religious country; and the mass of the people are a more church-going race than the masses of English population. I am not at all prepared to say that in the middle and lower ranks of life, our countrymen have undergone much change in regard to religious observances. But there can be no question that amongst the upper classes there are manifestations connected with religion now, which some years ago were not thought of. The attendance of men on public worship is of itself an example of the change we speak of. I am afraid that when Walter Scott described Monkbarns as with difficulty "hounded out" to hear the sermons of good Mr. Blattergowl, he wrote from practice generally prevalent amongst Scottish lairds. The late Bishop Sandford told me that when he first came to Edinburgh—I suppose fifty years ago—few gentlemen attended church—very few indeed were seen at the communion—so much

so that it was a matter of conversation when a male communicant, not an aged man, was observed at the table for the first time. Sydney Smith, when preaching in Edinburgh some forty years ago, seeing how almost exclusively congregations were made up of ladies, took for his text the verse from the Psalms, "Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord;" and with that touch of the facetious which marked everything he did, laid the emphasis on the word "men." Looking round the congregation and saying, "Oh that *men* would therefore praise the Lord," implying that he used the word, not to describe the human species generally, but the male individuals as distinguished from the female portion. In the matter of such attendances by young men, a marked change has taken place in my own experience. In fact, there is an attention excited towards church subjects, which thirty years ago would have been hardly credited. Nor is it only in connection with churches and church services that these changes have been brought forth, but an interest has been raised on the subject from Bible societies,

missionary associations at home and abroad, schools and reformatory institutions, most of which, for really active purposes, have grown up during fifty years. Nor should I omit to mention, what I trust may be considered as a change belonging to religious feeling, viz., that conversation is now conducted without that accompaniment of absurd and unmeaning oaths which was really once considered an essential embellishment of genteel discourse. I distinctly recollect an elderly gentleman, when describing the opinion of a refined and polished female upon a particular point, putting into her mouth an unmistakeable round oath as the natural language in which people's sentiments and opinions would be ordinarily conveyed. This is a change wrought in men's feelings, which all must hail with great pleasure. Putting out of sight for a moment the sin of such a practice, and the bad influence it must have had upon all emotions of reverence for the name and attributes of the Divine Being, and the natural effect of profane swearing, "to harden a' within," we might marvel at the utter folly and incongruity

of making the practice an expression of anger, of surprise, or often as expletive in common discourse. A quaint anecdote, descriptive of such senseless ebullition, I have from a friend who mentioned the names of parties concerned: A late Duke of Athol had invited a well-known character, a writer of Perth, to come up and meet him at Dunkeld for the transaction of some business. The Duke mentioned the day and hour when he should receive the man of law, who accordingly came punctually at the appointed time and place. But the Duke had forgotten the appointment, and gone to the hill, from which he could not return for some hours. A highlander present described the Perth writer's indignation, and his mode of showing it, by a most elaborate course of swearing. "But who did he swear at?" was the enquiry made of the narrator, who replied, "Ou' he didna sweer at ony thing parteecular, but juist stude in ta middle of ta road and swoor at lairge."

This is the place to notice changes which have taken place in regard to the questions of

taste in the building and embellishing Scottish places of worship generally. Some years back there was a great jealousy of ornament in connection with churches and church services, and, in fact, all such embellishments were considered as marks of a departure from the simplicity of old Scottish worship,—they were distinctive of Episcopacy as opposed to the severer modes of Presbyterianism. The late Sir William Forbes used to give an account of a conversation, indicative of this feeling, which he had overheard between an Edinburgh inhabitant and his friend from the country. They were passing St. John's, which had just been finished, and the countryman asked, "Whatna kirk was that?" "Oh," said the townsman, "that is an English chapel," meaning Episcopalian. "Aye," said his friend, "there'll be walth o' images there." But if, unable to sympathise with architectural church ornament and embellishment, how much less could they sympathise with the performance of divine service, which included such musical accompaniments as intoning, chanting, and anthems? On the first

introduction of Tractarianism into Scotland, the full choir service had been established in an Episcopal church, where a noble family had adopted those views, and carried them out regardless of expense. The lady who had been instrumental in getting up these musical services was very anxious that an old nurse of the family—a Presbyterian of the old school—should have an opportunity of hearing them; accordingly, she very kindly took her down to church in the carriage, and on returning asked her what she thought of the music, etc. "Ou, its varra bonny, varra bonny. But oh, my lady, it's an awfu' way of spending the Sabbath." The good woman could only look upon the whole thing as a musical performance. The organ was a great mark of distinction between Episcopalian and Presbyterian places of worship. I have heard of an old lady describing an Episcopalian clergyman, without any idea of disrespect, in these terms: "Oh, he is a whistle kirk minister." Of late years, however, a spirit of greater tolerance of such things has been growing up amongst us,—a greater tolerance,

I suspect, even of organs and liturgies. In fact, we may say a new era has begun in Scotland as to church architecture and church ornaments. The use of stained glass and the restoration of ancient edifices indicate a revolution of feeling regarding this question. Beautiful and expensive churches are rising everywhere, and belonging to all denominations. It is not long since the building or repairing a new church, or the preparing and adapting an old church, implied in Scotland simply a production of the greatest possible degree of ugliness and bad taste at the least possible expense, and certainly never included any notion of ornament in the details. Now, large sums are expended on places of worship without reference to creed. First-rate architects are employed. Fine Gothic structures are produced. The rebuilding of the Greyfriars' Church, the restoration of South Leith Church and of Glasgow Cathedral, mark the spirit of the times. One might hope that changes such as these in the feelings, tastes, and associations, would have a beneficial effect in bringing the worshippers themselves into a more general spirit of forbearance with each

other. A friend of mine used to tell a story of an honest builder's view of church differences, which was very amusing, and quaintly professional. An English gentleman, who had arrived in a Scottish country town, was walking about to examine the various objects which presented themselves, observed two rather handsome places of worship in course of erection nearly opposite to each other. He addressed a person, who happened to be the contractor for the chapels, and asked, "What was the difference between these two places of worship which were springing up so close to each other?" —meaning of course the difference of the theological tenets of the two congregations. The contractor, who thought only of architectural differences, innocently replied, "There may be a difference of sax feet in length, but there's no aboon a few inches in the breadth." Would that all our religious differences could be brought within so narrow a compass.

It might be a curious question to consider how far motives founded on mere taste or sentiment may have operated in creating an interest

towards religion, and in making it a more prominent and popular question than it was in the early portion of the present century. We have had in this country two causes which have combined in producing these effects :—1st. The great disruption which took place in the Church of Scotland no doubt called forth an attention to the subject which stirred up the public, and made religion at any rate a topic of deep interest for discussion and for partizanship. Men's minds are not allowed to remain in the torpid condition of a past generation. 2d. The æsthetic movement in religion, which some years since was made in England, has of course had its influence in Scotland, and many who showed little concern about religion whilst it was merely a question of doctrines, of precepts, and of worship, threw themselves keenly into the question when it became associated with ceremonial, and music, and high art. New ecclesiastical associations have been presented to Scottish tastes and feelings. With some minds, attachment to the church is attachment to her Gregorian tones, jewelled chalices, lighted candles,

embroidered altar-cloths, silver crosses, processions, copes, albs, and chasubles. But from whatever cause it proceeds, a great change has taken place in the general interest excited towards ecclesiastical questions. Religion now has increased associations with the ordinary current of human life. In times past it was kept more as a thing apart. There was a false delicacy which made people shrink from encountering appellations that were usually bestowed upon those who made a more prominent appearance than the world at large, in regard to a religious profession. A great change has taken place in this respect with persons of *all* shades of religious opinions. With an increased attention to the *externals* of religion, we believe that in many points the heart is more exercised also. Take, as an example, the practice of family prayer. Many excellent and pious households of the former generation would not venture upon the observance, I am afraid, because they were in dread of the sneer. There was a foolish application of the terms Methodists, saints, over-righteous, and so

on, where the practice was observed. It was to take up a rather decided position in the neighbourhood, and I can testify, that less than fifty years ago, a family would have been marked and talked of for a usage of which now throughout the country the *exception* is rather the unusual circumstance. A little anecdote from recollections in my own family will furnish a good illustration of a state of feeling on this point now happily unknown. In a northern town of the east coast, where the earliest recollections of my life go back, there was usually a detachment of a regiment who were kindly received and welcomed to the society, which in the winter months was very full and very gay. There was the usual measure of dining, dancing, supping, card-playing, and gossipping which prevailed in country towns at the time. The officers were of course an object of much interest to the natives, and their habits were much discussed. A friend was staying in the family who partook a good deal of the Athenian temperament, viz., a delight in hearing and telling some new thing. On one occasion she burst

forth in great excitement with the intelligence that "Sir Nathaniel Duckinfield, the officer in command of the detachment, had family prayers every morning!" A very near and dear relative of mine, knowing the tendency of the lady to gossip, pulled her up with the exclamation: "How can you repeat such things, Miss Ogilvy; nothing in the world but the ill-natured stories of Montrose!!" The remark was made quite innocently and unconsciously of the bitter satire it conveyed upon the feeling of the place. The "ill-nature" of these stories was true enough, because ill-nature was the motive of those who raised them; not because it is an ill-natured thing of itself to say of a family that they had household prayers, but the ill-nature consisted in their intending to throw out a sneer and a sarcasm upon a subject where all such reflections are unbecoming and indecorous. It is one of the best proofs of change of habits and associations on this matter, that the anecdote, exquisite as it is for our purpose, will hardly be understood by many of our young friends, or, at least, happily has lost much of its force and pungency.

These remarks apply to the state of religious feeling amongst the upper classes of society. I am not aware of much change in the religious habits of the Scottish peasantry—perhaps the elders have yielded something from the sternness of David Deans. But, as compared with the corresponding class in England, there are many circumstances to distinguish the theological tenets and strict observance of religious ordinances of the Scottish from the usual feelings of the English peasant. A friend has informed me that the late Lord Rutherfurd often told with much interest, of a rebuke which he received from a shepherd, near Bonally, amongst the Pentlands. He had entered into conversation with him, and was complaining bitterly of the weather, which prevented him enjoying his visit to the country, and said hastily and unguardedly, "What a d——d mist!" The shepherd, a tall, grim figure, turned sharp round upon him. "What ails you at the mist, sir; it wats the grass, and slockens the ewes"—adding, with much solemnity, "It's God's wull;" and turned away with lofty

indignation. Lord Rutherfurd used to repeat this with much candour as a fine specimen of rebuke from a sincere and simple mind. Something like this is reported of an eminent professor of geology, who, visiting in the Highlands, met an old man on the hills on Sunday morning. The professor, partly from the effect of habit, and not adverting to the very strict notions on Sabbath desecration entertained in Ross-shire, had his pocket-hammer in hand, and was thoughtlessly breaking the specimens of minerals he picked up by the way. The old man for some time eyed the geologist, and going up to him, quietly said, "Sir, ye're breaking something there forbye the stanes!" The Scottish peasantry of the older school were extremely jealous of any minister who departed from their high standard of orthodox divinity by selecting subjects which involved discussions of strictly moral or practical questions. A worthy old clergyman having, upon the occasion of a communion Monday, taken a text of such a character, was thus commented on by an ancient dame of the congregation, who was previously acquainted

with his style of discourse:—"If there's an ill text in a' the Bible, that creetur's aye sure to tak it."

The feelings on such subjects entertained by the inhabitants of our crowded cities, wynds, and closes, are no criterion of the national religious character. It is a great difficulty to get them to attend Divine worship at all, as many circumstances combine to break off all the associations with public services. A lady, who is most active in that department, gives me an amusing instance of self-complacency arising from such attendance. She was visiting in the West Port not far from the church established by my illustrious friend Dr. Chalmers. Having asked a poor woman if she ever attended it for Divine service—"Ou ay," she replied; "there's a man ca'd Chalmers preaches there, and I whiles gang in and hear him, just to encourage him, puir body!"

From the religious opinions of a people, the transition is natural to their political partialities. One great political change has passed over Scotland, which none now living can hardly be said

to have actually witnessed; but they remember those who were contemporaries of the anxious scenes of '45, and many of us have known determined and thorough Jacobites. The poetry of that political period still remains, and we hear but as pleasant songs those words and melodies which stirred the hearts and excited the deep enthusiasm of a past generation. But Jacobite anecdotes are fading from our knowledge. To many young persons they are unknown. Of these stories illustrative of Jacobite feelings and enthusiasm, many are of a character not fit for me to record. The good old ladies who were violent partisans of the Stuarts had little hesitation in referring without reserve to the future and eternal destiny of William of Orange. One anecdote I had from a near relative of the family may be adduced in illustration of the powerful hold which the cause had upon the views and consciences of Jacobites. A former Mr. Stirling of Keir had favoured the Stuart cause, and had in fact attended a muster of forces at the Brig of Turk in the year 1708. This symptom of a rising

against the government occasioned much attention, and the authorities were very active in their endeavours to discover who were the leaders of the movement. Keir was suspected. The miller of Keir was brought forward as a witness, and swore positively that the Laird was *not* present. Now, as it was well known that he was there, and that the miller knew it, a neighbour asked him privately, when he came out of the witness-box, how he could on oath assert such a falsehood. The miller replied, quite undaunted, and with a feeling of confidence in the righteousness of his cause approaching the sublime,—"I would rather trust my soul to God's mercy than trust Keir's head into their hands."

II. The next change in manners which has been effected in the memory of many now living, is in the habits of conviviality, or, to speak more plainly, in the banishment of drunkenness from genteel society. It is indeed a most important and a blessed change. But it is a change of which many persons have little notion. It is hardly

possible to realize the scenes which took place in society within fifty years back. In many houses, when a party dined, the ladies going away was the signal for the commencement of a system of compulsory conviviality. No one was allowed to shirk — no daylight — no heeltaps — was the wretched jargon in which was expressed the propriety and the duty of seeing that the glass when filled must be emptied and drained. We have heard of glasses having the bottoms knocked off, so that no shuffling tricks might be played with them, and that they could only be put down— empty. Such scenes must have been most revolting to sober persons who were unaccustomed to extreme conviviality. As in the case of a drinking Angus laird, entertaining for his guest a London merchant of formal manners and temperate habits. The poor man was driven from the table when the drinking set in hard, and stole away to take refuge in his bedroom. The company, however, were determined not to let the worthy citizen off so easily, but proceeded in a body, with the laird at their head, and invaded his privacy, by exhibiting

bottles and glasses at his bed-side. Losing all patience, the wretched victim gasped out his indignation,—"Sir, your hospitality borders upon brutality." It must have had a fatal influence on many characters not strong-minded enough to resist the temptations to excess. Poor James Boswell, who certainly required no *extraordinary* urging to take a glass too much, is found, in the recent letters which have just come to light, laying the blame of excesses of his to "falling into a habit which still prevails in Scotland;" and then he remarks with censorious emphasis on the "drunken manners of his countrymen." This was about 1770. In my part of the country the traditionary stories of drinking prowess are quite marvellous. On Deeside there flourished a certain Saunders Paul, an innkeeper at Banchory (whom I remember an old man). He was said to have drank whisky, glass for glass, to the claret of Mr. Maule and the Laird of Skene for a whole evening; and in those days there was a traditional story of his dispatching at one sitting, in company with a celebrated character for conviviality—one of the

men employed to float rafts of timber down the Dee—three dozen of porter. Of this Mr. Paul, it was recorded, that on being asked if he considered porter as a wholesome beverage, he replied, "Oh yes, if you don't take above a dozen." Saunders Paul was, as I have said, the innkeeper at Banchory; his friend and porter companion was drowned in the Dee, and when told that the body had been found down the stream below Crathes, he coolly remarked, "I am surprised at that, for I never kenn'd him pass the inn before without comin' in for a glass."

There was a sort of infatuation in the supposed dignity and manliness attached to powers of deep potation. A positive *eclat* was attached to the accomplished and well-trained consumer of claret or of whisky toddy, which gave an importance and even merit to the practice of drinking, which had a most injurious effect. I am afraid some of the Pleydels of the old school would have looked with the most ineffable contempt on the present degeneracy in this respect, and that the temperance movement would be little short of

insanity in their eyes; and this leads me to a remark.—In considering this portion of our subject, we should bear in mind a distinction. The change we now speak of involves more than a mere change of a custom or practice in social life. It is a change in men's sentiments and feelings on a certain great question of morals. Except we enter into this distinction, we cannot appreciate the extent of the change which has really taken place in regard to intemperate habits. I have an anecdote from a descendant of Principal Robertson, of an address made to him, which shewed the real importance attached to all that concerned the system of drinking in his day. The Principal had been invited to spend some days in a country house, and the minister of the parish (a jovial character) had been asked to meet him. Before dinner he went up to Dr. Robertson and addressed him confidentially, "Doctor, I understand ye are brother of my gude freend Peter Robertson of Edinburgh, therefore I'll gie ye a piece of advice,—Bend* weel to the Madeira at dinner, for

* Old Scotch for drink hard.

here ye'll get little o't after." I have known persons who held that a man who could not drink must have a degree of feebleness and imbecility of character. But as this is an important point, I will adduce the higher authority of Lord Cockburn, and quote from him two examples, very different certainly in their nature, but both bearing upon the question. I refer to what he says of Lord Hermand—"With Hermand drinking was a virtue; he had a sincere respect for drinking, indeed a high moral approbation, and a serious compassion for the poor wretches who *could* not indulge in it, and with due contempt of those who could but did not;" and, secondly, I refer to Lord C.'s pages for an anecdote which illustrates the perverted feeling I refer to, now happily no longer existing. It relates the opinion expressed by an old drunken writer of Selkirk (whose name is not mentioned) regarding his anticipation of professional success for Mr. Cranston, afterwards Lord Corehouse. Sir Walter Scott, William Erskine, and Cranston had dined with this Selkirk writer, and Scott, of hardy, strong, and healthy

frame, had matched the writer himself in the matter of whisky punch. Poor Cranston, of refined and delicate mental and bodily temperament, was a bad hand at such work, and was soon off the field. On the party breaking up, the Selkirk writer expressed his admiration of Scott, assuring him that *he* would rise high in the profession, and adding: "I'll tell ye what, Maister Walter, that lad Cranston may get to the tap o' the bar, if he can; but tak' my word for't, it's no be by drinking." A legal friend has told me of a celebrated circuit where Lord Hermand was judge, and Clephane depute-advocate. The party got drunk at Ayr, and so continued (although quite able for their work) till the business was concluded at Jedburgh. Some years after, my informant heard that this circuit had, at Jedburgh, acquired the permanent name of "the *daft* circuit." Lord Cockburn was fond of describing a circuit scene at Stirling, in his early days at the bar, under the presidency of his uncle Lord Hermand. After the circuit dinner, and when drinking had gone on for some time, young Cockburn observed places

becoming vacant in the social circle, but no one going out at the door. He found that the individuals had dropt down under the table. He took the hint, and by this ruse retired from the scene. He lay quiet till the beams of the morning sun penetrated the apartment. The judge and some of his staunch friends coolly walked up stairs, washed their hands and faces, came down to breakfast, and went into court quite fresh and fit for work. The feeling of importance frequently attached to powers of drinking, was formally attested by a well-known western baronet of convivial habits and convivial memory. He was desirous of bearing testimony to the probity, honour, and other high moral qualities of a friend whom he desired to commend. Having fully stated these claims to consideration and respect, he deemed it proper to notice also his convivial attainments; he added accordingly, with cautious approval on so important a point,—"and he is a fair drinker."

In the Highlands this sort of feeling extended to an almost incredible extent, even so much as to obscure the moral and religious sentiments. Of

this a striking proof was afforded in a circumstance which took place in my own church soon after I came into it. One of our Gaelic clergy had so far forgotten himself as to appear in the church somewhat the worse of liquor. This having happened so often as to come to the ears of the Bishop, he suspended him from the performance of divine service. Against this decision the people were a little disposed to rebel, because, according to their Highland notions, "a gentleman was no the waur for being able to tak' a gude glass of whisky." These were the notions of a people in whose eyes the power of swallowing whisky conferred distinction, and with whom inability to take the fitting quantity was a mark of a mean and futile character. Sad to tell, the funerals of Highland chieftains were celebrated by immoderate and often fatal consumption of whisky. It has been related that at the last funeral in the Highlands, conducted according to the traditions of the olden times, several of the guests fell victims to the usage, and lost their lives on the occasion. Such notions of what is due to the memory of the

departed have now become unusual if not obsolete. I myself witnessed the first great instance of a change in this matter. I officiated at the funeral of the late Duke of Sutherland. The procession was a mile long. Refreshments were provided for 7000 persons; beef, bread, and beer, but not one glass of whisky was allowed on the property that day! It may, perhaps, be said that the change we speak of is not peculiar to Scotland; that in England the same change has been apparent, and that drunkenness has passed away in the higher circles, as a matter of course, as refinement and taste made an advancement in society. This is true. But there were some features of the question which were peculiar to Scotland, and which at one time rendered it less probable that intemperance would give way in the north. It seemed in some quarters to have taken deeper root amongst us. The system of pressing both in eating and drinking seemed more inveterate. Nothing can more powerfully illustrate the deep-rooted character of intemperate habits in families, than an anecdote which was related to me, as

coming from the late Mr. Mackenzie, author of the "Man of Feeling." He had been involved in a regular drinking party. He was keeping as free from the usual excesses as he was able, and as he marked companions around him falling victims to the power of drink, his attention was called to a small pair of hands working at his throat; on asking what it was, a voice replied, "Sir, I'm the lad that's to louse the neckcloths." Here then was a family where, on drinking occasions, it was the appointed duty of one of the household to attend, and when the guests were becoming helpless, to untie their cravats in fear of apoplexy or suffocation. We ought certainly to be grateful for the change which has taken place from such a system; for this change has made a great revolution in Scottish social life. The charm and the romance long attached in the minds of some of our countrymen to the whole system and concerns of hard drinking was indeed most lamentable and absurd. At tavern suppers, where, nine times out of ten, it was the express *object* of those who went to get drunk, such stuff as "regal purple stream,"

" rosy wine," " quaffing the goblet," " bright sparkling nectar," " chasing the rosy hours," and so on, tended to keep up the delusion, and make it a monstrous fine thing for men to sit up drinking half the night, and making maudlin idiots of themselves as they went home, and becoming brutes amongst their family when they got home. The favourable reaction which has taken place in regard to acts of intemperance may very fairly, in the first place, be referred to an improved moral feeling. But other causes have also assisted ; and it is curious to observe how the different changes in the modes of society bear upon one another. The alteration in the convivial habits which we are noticing in our own country may be partly due to alteration of hours. The old plan of early dining favoured a system of suppers, and after supper was a great time for convivial songs and sentiments. This of course induced drinking to a late hour. Most drinking songs imply the night as the season of conviviality—thus in a popular madrigal :—

"By the gaily circling glass
We can tell how minutes pass,
By the hollow cask are we told
How the waning *night* grows old."

And Burns thus marks the time:—

"It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That's blinkin in the lift sae hie;
She shines sae bright, to wyle us hame,
But by my sooth she'll wait a wee."

The young people of the present day have no idea of the state of matters in regard to the supper system when it was the normal condition of society. The late dining hours may make the social circle more formal, but they have been far less favourable to drinking propensities. After such dinners as ours are now, suppers are clearly out of the question. One is astonished to look back and recal the scenes to which were attached associations of hilarity, conviviality, and enjoyment. Drinking parties were protracted beyond the whole Sunday, having begun by a dinner on Saturday; imbecility and prostrate helplessness were a common result of these bright and jovial scenes; and by what perversion of language, or by what

obliquity of sentiment, the notions of pleasure could be attached to scenes of such excess—to the nausea, the disgust of sated appetite, and the racking headache—it is not easy to explain. There were men of heads so hard, and of stomachs so insensible, that, like my friend Saunders Paul, they could stand anything in the way of drink. But to men in general, and to the more delicate constitutions, such a life must have been a cause of great misery. To a certain extent, and up to a certain point, wine may be a refreshment and a wholesome stimulant; nay, it is a medicine, and a valuable one, and as such, comes recommended on fitting occasions by the physician. *Beyond* this point, as sanctioned and approved by nature, the use of wine is only degradation. Well did the sacred writer call wine, when thus taken in excess, "a mocker." It makes all men equal, because it makes them all idiotic. It allures them into a vicious indulgence, and then mocks their folly, by depriving them of any sense they may ever have possessed.

It does not appear that at this time a similar

excess in *eating* accompanied this prevalent tendency to excess in drinking. Scottish tables were at that period plain and abundant, but epicurism or gluttony do not seem to have been handmaids to drunkenness. A humorous anecdote, however, of a full-eating laird, may well accompany those which appertain to the drinking lairds.—A lady in the north having watched the proceedings of a guest, who ate long and largely, she ordered the servant to take away, as he had at last laid down, his knife and fork. To her surprise, however, he resumed his work, and she apologised to him, saying, "I thought, Mr. ——, you had done." "Oh, so I had, mem; but I just fan' a pigeon amang my *redd*." He had discovered a pigeon lurking amongst the bones and refuse of his plate, and could not resist finishing it.

III. We come now to a subject on which a great change has taken place in this country during my own experience. I allude to the third division which we proposed of these desultory remarks, viz., those peculiarities of intercourse which some years

back marked the connection between masters and servants. In many Scottish houses a great familiarity prevailed between members of the family and the domestics. For this many reasons might have been assigned. Indeed, when we consider the simple modes of life which discarded the ideas of ceremony or etiquette, the retired and uniform style of living which afforded few opportunities for break or change in the domestic arrangements, and when we add to these a free, unrestrained, unformal, and natural style of intercommunion, which seems rather a national characteristic, we need not be surprised to find in quiet Scottish families a sort of intercourse with old domestics which can hardly be looked for now, when habits are changing so fast, and where much of the quiet eccentricity belonging to us as a national characteristic is almost necessarily softened down or driven out. Many circumstances thus conspired to promote familiarity with old domestics which are now entirely changed. We take the case of a middle-aged servant, or a young servant passing year after year in a family. The servant grows up into old age and confirmed

habits when the laird is becoming a man, a husband, father of a family. The domestic cannot forget the days when his master was a child, riding on his back, applying to him for help in difficulties about his fishing, his rabbits, his pony, his going to school. All the family know how attached he is; nobody likes to speak cross to him. He is a privileged man. The faithful old servant of thirty, forty, or fifty years, if with a tendency to be jealous, cross, and interfering, becomes a great nuisance. Still the relative position was the result of good feelings. If the familiarity sometimes became a nuisance, it was a wholesome nuisance, and relic of a simpler time gone by. But the case of the old servant, whether agreeable or troublesome, was often so fixed and established in the households of past days, that there was scarce a possibility of getting away from it. The well-known story of the answer of one of these domestic tyrants to the irritated master, who was making an effort to free himself from the thraldom, shows the idea entertained by *one* of the parties, at least, of the permanency of the tenure. I am

assured by a friend that the true edition of the story was this—An old Mr. Erskine of Dun had one of these old retainers, under whose language and unreasonable assumption he had long groaned. He had almost determined to bear it no longer, when, walking out with his man, on crossing a field, the master exclaimed, "There's a hare." Andrew looked at the place, and coolly replied, "What a big lee, it's a cauff." The master, quite angry now, plainly told the old domestic that they *must* part. But the tried servant of forty years, not dreaming of the possibility of *his* dismissal, innocently asked, "Ay, sir; whare ye gaun? I'm sure ye're aye best at hame;" supposing that, if there were to be any disruption, it must be the master who would change the place. An example of a similar fixedness of tenure in an old servant was afforded in an anecdote related of an old coachman long in the service of a noble lady, and who gave all the trouble and annoyance which he conceived were the privileges of his position in the family. At last the lady fairly gave him notice to quit, and told him he

must go. The only satisfaction she got was the quiet answer, "Na, na, my lady; I druve ye to your marriage, and I shall stay to drive ye to your burial." It is but fair, however, to give an anecdote in which the master and the servant's position was *reversed*, in regard to the wish for change:— An old servant of a relative of my own, with an ungovernable temper, became at last so weary of his master's irascibility, that he declared he must leave, and gave as his reason the fits of anger which came on and produced such great annoyance that he could not stand it any longer. His master, unwilling to lose him, tried to coax him by reminding him that the anger was soon off. "Aye," replied the other very shrewdly, "but it's nae suner aff than it's on again." I remember well an old servant of the old school, who had been fifty years domesticated in a family. Indeed I well remember the celebration of the half-century service completed. There were rich scenes with Sandy and his mistress. Let me recall you both to memory. Let me think of you, the kind, generous, warm-hearted mistress. A

gentlewoman by descent and by feeling. A true friend, a sincere Christian; and let me think, too, of you, Sandy, an honest, faithful, and attached member of the family. For you were in that house rather as an humble friend than a servant. But out of this fifty years of attached service there sprung a sort of domestic relation and freedom of intercourse which would surprise people in these days. And yet Sandy knew his place. Like Corporal Trim, who, although so familiar and admitted to so much familiarity with my Uncle Toby, never failed in the respectful address—never forgot to say "your honour." At a dinner party Sandy was very active about changing his mistress's plate, and whipped it off when he saw that she had got a piece of rich pattee upon it. His mistress not liking such rapid movements, and at the same time knowing that remonstrance was in vain, exclaimed, "Hout, Sandy, I'm no dune," and dabbed her fork into the pattee as it disappeared, to rescue a morsel. I remember her praise of English mutton was a great annoyance to the Scottish prejudices of Sandy. One day she

was telling me of a triumph Sandy had upon that subject. The smell of the joint roasting had become very offensive through the house. The lady called out to Sandy to have the doors closed, and adding, "that must be some horrid Scotch mutton you have got." To Sandy's delight this was a leg of English mutton his mistress had expressly chosen, and as she significantly told me, "Sandy never let that down upon me."

On Deeside there existed, in my recollection, besides the Saunders Paul I have alluded to, a number of extraordinary acute and humorous Scottish characters amongst the lower classes. The native gentry enjoyed their humour, and hence arose a familiarity of intercourse which called forth many amusing scenes and quaint rejoinders. A celebrated character of this description bore the soubriquet of "Boaty." He had acted as Charon of the Dee at Banchory, and passed the boat over the river before there was a bridge. Boaty had many curious sayings recorded of him. When speaking of the gentry around, he characterised them according to their occupa-

tions and activity of habits—thus, "As to Mr. Russell of Blackha', he just works himsell like a paid labourer; Mr. Duncan's a' the day fish, fish; but Sir Robert's a perfect gentleman; he does naething, naething." Boaty was a first-rate salmon fisher himself, and was much sought after by amateurs who came to Banchory for the sake of the sport afforded by the beautiful Dee. He was perhaps a little spoiled, and presumed upon the indulgence and familiarity shewn to him in the way of his craft,—as, for example, he was in attendance with his boat on a sportsman who was both skilful and successful, for he caught salmon after salmon. Between each fish catching he solaced himself with a good pull from a flask, which he returned to his pocket, however, without offering to let Boaty have any participation in the refreshment. Boaty, partly a little professionally jealous, perhaps, at the success, and partly indignant at receiving less than his usual attention on such occasions, and seeing no prospect of amendment, deliberately pulled the boat to shore, shouldered the oars, rods, landing-nets, and all

the fishing apparatus which he had provided, and set off homewards. His companion, far from considering his day's work to be over, and keen for more sport, was amazed, and peremptorily ordered him to come back. But all the answer made by the offended Boaty was, "Na, na; them 'at drink by themsells may just fish by themsells."

The charge these old domestics used to take of the interests of the family, and the cool way in which they took upon them to protect those interests, sometimes led to very provoking, and sometimes to very ludicrous exhibitions of importance. A friend told me of a dinner scene illustrative of this sort of interference which had happened at Airth in the last generation. Mrs. Murray of Abercairney had been amongst the guests, and at dinner one of the family noticed that she was looking for the proper spoon to help herself with salt. The old servant Thomas was appealed to, that the want might be supplied. He did not notice the appeal. It was repeated in a more peremptory manner, "Thomas, Mrs. Murray has not a salt spoon," to which he replied most em-

phatically, "Last time Mrs. Murray dined here, we *lost* a salt spoon." An old servant who took a similar charge of everything that went on in the family, having observed that his master thought he had drank wine with every lady at table, but had overlooked one, jogged his memory with the question, "What ails ye at her wi' the green gown?"

In my own family I know a case of a very long service, and where no doubt there was much interest and attachment, but it was a case where the temper had not softened under the influence of years, but had rather assumed that form of disposition which we denominate *crusty*. My grand-uncle, Sir A. Ramsay, died in 1806, and left a domestic who had been in his service since he was ten years of age; and being at the time of his master's death past fifty or well on to sixty, he must have been more than forty years a servant in the family. From the retired life my grand-uncle had been leading, Jamie Layal had much of his own way, and, like many a domestic so situated, he did not like to be contradicted, and, in fact, could not bear to be found fault with. My uncle,

who had succeeded to a part of my grand-uncle's property, succeeded also to Jamie Layal, and from respect to his late master's memory and Jamie's own services, he took him into his house, intending him to act as house servant. However, this did not answer, and he was soon kept on, more with the form than the reality of any active duty, and took any light work that was going on about the house. In this capacity it was his daily task to feed a flock of turkeys who were growing up to maturity. On one occasion, my aunt having followed him in his work, and having observed an enormous waste of food, and that the ground was actually covered with grain which they could not eat, and which would soon be destroyed and lost, naturally remonstrated, and suggested a more reasonable and provident supply. But all the answer she got from the offended Jamie was a bitter rejoinder, "Weel, then, neist time they shall get nane ava!" On another occasion a family from a distance had called whilst my uncle and aunt were out of the house. Jamie came into the parlour to deliver the cards, or to announce that

they had called. My aunt, somewhat vexed at not having been in the way, inquired what message Mr. and Mrs. Innes had left, as she had expected one. "No! no message." She returned to the charge, and asked again if they had not told him anything he was to repeat. Still "No! no message." "But did they say nothing? Are you sure they said nothing?" Jamie, sadly put out and offended at being thus interrogated, at last burst forth, "They neither said ba nor bum," and indignantly left the room, banging the door after him. A characteristic anecdote of one of these old domestics I have from a friend who was acquainted with the parties concerned. The old man was standing at the side-board and attending to the demands of a pretty large dinner party; the calls made for various wants from the company became so numerous and frequent that the attendant got quite bewildered, and lost his patience and temper; at length he gave vent to his indignation in the remonstrance addressed to the whole company, "Cry a' thegither, that's the way to be served."

I have heard of an old Forfarshire lady who,

knowing the habits of her old and spoilt servant, when she wished a note to be taken without loss of time, held it open and read it over to him, saying, "There noo, Andrew, ye ken a' that's in't; noo dinna stop to open it, but just send it aff." Of another servant when sorely tried by an unaccustomed bustle and hurry, a very amusing anecdote has been recorded. His mistress, a woman of high rank, who had been living in much quiet and retirement for some time, was called upon to entertain a large party at dinner. She consulted with Nichol, her faithful servant, and all the arrangements were made for the great event. As the company were arriving, the lady saw Nichol running about in great agitation, and in his shirt sleeves. She remonstrated, and said that as the guests were coming in he must put on his coat. "Indeed, my lady," was his excited reply, "indeed, there's sae muckle rinning here and rinning there, that I'm just distrackit. I hae cast'n my coat and waistcoat, and faith I dinna ken how lang I can thole* my breeks." There

* Bear.

is often a ready wit in this class of character, marked by their replies. I have the following communicated from an ear-witness: "Weel, Peggy," said a man to an old family servant, "I wonder yer aye single yet?" "Me marry," said she indignantly; "I wadna gie my single life for a' the double anes I ever saw."

An old woman was exhorting a servant once about her ways. "You serve the deevil," said she. "Me!" said the girl; "Na, na, I dinna serve the deevil, I serve ae single lady."

A baby was out with the nurse, who walked it up and down a garden. "Is't a laddie or a lassie?" said the gardener. "A laddie," said the maid. "Weel," says he, "I'm glad o' that, for there's ower mony women in the world." "Hech man," said Jess, "div ye no ken there's aye maist sawn o' the best crap?"

The answers of servants used curiously to illustrate habits and manners of the time,—as the economical modes of her mistress' life were well touched by the lass who thus described her ways and domestic habits with her household: "She's

vicious upo' the wark; but eh, she's vary mysterious o' the victualling."

A country habit of making the gathering of the congregation in the churchyard previous to and after divine service an occasion for gossip and business, which I remember well, is thoroughly described in the following:—A lady, on hiring a servant-girl in the country, told her, as a great indulgence, that she should have the liberty of attending the church every Sunday, but that she would be expected to return home always immediately on the conclusion of service. The lady, however, rather unexpectedly found a positive objection raised against this apparently reasonable arrangement. "Na, na," said the lass, "I canna du that; I wadna gie the crack o' the kirkyard for a' the service."

The changes that many of us have lived to witness in this kind of intercourse between families and old servants is a part of a still greater change—the change in that modification of the feudal system, the attachment of clans. This, also, from transfers of property and extinction of old families in the

Highlands, as well as from more general causes, is passing away; and it includes also changes in the intercourse between landed proprietors and cottagers, and abolition of harvest homes, and such meetings. People are now more independent of each other, and service is become a pecuniary and not a sentimental question. The extreme contrast of that old-fashioned Scottish intercourse of families with their servants and dependants, of which I have given some amusing examples, is found in the modern manufactory system. There the service is a mere question of personal interest. One of our first practical engineers, and one of the first engine-makers in England, told my brother that he employed and paid handsomely on an average 1200 workmen; but that they held so little feeling for him as their master, that not above half a dozen of the number would notice him when passing him either in the works or out of work hours. Contrast this advanced stage of dependants' indifference with the familiarity of domestic intercourse we have been describing!

IV. We come next to reminiscences chiefly connected with peculiarities which turned upon our Scottish LANGUAGE, including, of course, change of dialect and expressions. Now this is a very important change, and affects in a greater degree than many persons would imagine the general modes and aspect of society. I suppose at one time the two countries of England and Scotland were considered as almost speaking a different language, and I suppose also, that from the period of the union of the crowns the language has been assimilating. We see the process of assimilation going on, and ere long amongst persons of education and birth very little difference will be perceptible. With regard to that class a great change has taken place in my time. I recollect old Scottish ladies and gentlemen who regularly *spoke Scotch*. It was not, mark me, speaking English with an accent. No; it was downright Scotch. Every tone and every syllable was Scotch. For example, I recollect old Miss Erskine of Dun, a fine specimen of a real lady, and daughter of an ancient Scottish house. Many

people now would not understand her. She was always the lady, notwithstanding her dialect, and to none could the epithet vulgar be less appropriately applied. I speak of thirty years ago, and yet I recollect her accost to me as well as if it were yesterday. "I did na ken ye were i' the toun." Taking words and accent together, an address how totally unlike what we now meet with in society. Some of the old Scottish words which we can remember are delicious; but how strange they would sound to the ears of the present generation! Fancy that in walking from church, and discussing the sermon, a lady of rank should now express her opinion of it by the description of its being "but a hummelcorn discourse." Many living persons can remember Angus old ladies who would say to their nieces and daughters, "What-na hummel-doddie of a mutch hae ye gotten?" meaning a flat and low-crowned cap. I profess myself an out and out Scotchman. I have strong national partialities—call them if you will national prejudices. I cherish a great love of old Scottish language. Some of our pure Scottish ballad

poetry is unsurpassed in any language for grace and pathos. How expressive, how beautiful are its phrases! You can't translate them. Take this example of power in a Scotch expression to describe what is in human life, and it is one of our most familiar ones; as thus,—we meet an old friend, we talk over by-gone days, and remember many who were dear to us both, once bright and young and gay, of whom some remain, honoured, prosperous, and happy—of whom some are under a cloud of misfortune or disgrace—some are broken in health and spirits—some sunk into the grave; we recal old familiar places—old companions, pleasures, and pursuits; as Scotchmen our hearts are touched with these remembrances of

AULD LANG SYNE.

Match me the phrase in English. You can't translate it. The fitness and the beauty lie in the felicity of the language. Like many happy expressions, it is not transferable into another tongue, just like the "simplex munditiis" of Horace, which describes the natural grace of female elegance, or the ἀνηριθμον γελασμα of

Æschylus, which describes the bright sparkling of the ocean in the sun. I cannot help thinking that a change of national language involves also a change of national character. Numerous examples of great power in Scottish phraseology, both in the picturesque, the feeling, the wise, and the humorous, might be taken from the works of Robert Burns or Allan Ramsay, and which lose their charm altogether when *unscottified*. The speaker certainly seems to take a strength and character from his words. We must now look for specimens of this racy and expressive tongue in the more retired parts of the country. It is no longer to be found in high places. It has disappeared from the social circles of our cities. In my early days the intercourse with the peasantry of Forfarshire, Kincardineshire, and especially of Deeside, was most amusing, not that the things said were so much out of the common, as that the language in which they were conveyed was picturesque, and odd, and taking. And certainly it does appear to me that as the language grows more uniform and conventional, less marked

and peculiar in its dialect and expressions, so does the character of those who speak it become so. I have a rich sample of Mid-Lothian Scotch from a young friend in the country, who describes the conversation of an old woman on the property as amusing her by such specimens of genuine Scottish raciness and humour. On one occasion, for instance, the young lady had told her humble friend that she was going to Ireland, and would have to undergo a sea voyage. "Weel, noo, ye dinna mean that! Aince I thocht to gang across to tither side o' the Queensferry wi' some ither folks to a fair, ye ken; but just when ere I pat my fit in the boat, the boat gie wallop, and my heart gie a loup, and I thocht I'd gang oot o' my judgement athegither, so says I, Na, na, ye gang awa by yoursells to tither side, and I'll bide here till sik times as ye come awa back." When we hear our Scottish language at home, and spoken by our own countrymen, we are not struck with any remarkable effects; but it must have a far more impressive character when heard amongst those who speak a different tongue, and when

encountered in other lands. I recollect the late Sir Robert Liston expressing this feeling in his own case. When our ambassador at Constantinople, some Scotchmen had been recommended to him for some purpose of private or of government business; and Sir Robert was always ready to do a kind thing for a countryman. He found them out in a barber's shop waiting for being shaved in turn. One came in rather late, and, seeing he had scarcely room at the end of the seat, addressed his countryman, "Neebour, wad ye sit a bit wast." What strong associations must have been called up, by hearing in a distant land such an expression in Scottish tones. We may fancy the amusement of the officers of a regiment in the West Indies at the innocent remark of a young lad, who had just joined from Scotland. On meeting at dinner, his salutation to his colonel was, "Anither het day, Cornal," as if "het days" were in Barbadoes few and far between, as they were in his dear old stormy cloudy Scotland. Or take the case of a Scottish saying, which indicated at once her dialect and

the economical habits of her hardy and struggling sons. A young Scotchman who had been some time in London, met his friend recently come up from the north to pursue his fortune in the great metropolis. On discussing matters connected with their new life in London, the more experienced visitor remarked upon the greater *expenses* there than in the retired Scottish town which they had left. "Aye," said the other, sighing over the reflection, "Whun ye get cheenge for a saxpence here, it's soon slippit awa." I recollect a story of my father's which illustrates the force of dialect, although confined to the inflections of a single monosyllable. On riding home one evening, he passed a cottage or small farm-house, where there was a considerable assemblage of people, and an evident incipient merry-making for some festive occasion. On asking one of the lasses standing about what it was, she answered, "Ou it's just a wedding of Jock Thomson and Janet Fraser." To the question, "Is the bride rich?" there was a plain quiet "Na." "Is she young?" a more emphatic and

decided "Naa!" but to the query, "Is she bonny?" a most elaborate and prolonged shout of "Naaa!" Another amusing anecdote of a pithy and jocular reply, comprised in one syllable, is recorded of an eccentric legal Scottish functionary of the last century. An advocate, of whose legal qualifications he had formed rather a low estimate, was complaining to him of being passed over in a recent appointment to the bench, and expressed his sense of the injustice with which he had been treated. He was very indignant at his claims and merit being overlooked, adding, bitterly and earnestly, "And I can tell you they might have got a worse man for the appointment." To which the only answer was a dry and prolonged, "Whare?" As I have said, the oddity and acuteness of the speaker arose from the manner of expression, not from the thing said. In fact, the same thing said in plain English would be mere commonplace. I recollect being much amused with a dialogue between my brother and his man, the chief manager of a farm which he had just taken, and,

I suspect, in a good measure manager of the *farmer* as well. At any rate he committed to this acute overseer all the practical details; and on the present occasion had sent him to market to dispose of a cow and a pony, a simple enough transaction, and with a simple enough result. The cow was brought back, the pony was sold. But the man's description of it forms the point. "Well, John, have you sold the cow?" "Na, but I *grippit* a chiel for the powny!" The "*grippit*" was most expressive! I remember accompanying a shooting party on the Grampians, not with a gun like the rest, but with a botanical box for collecting specimens of mountain plants. The party had got very hot, and very tired, and very cross. On the way home, whilst sitting down to rest, a gamekeeper sort of attendant, and a character in his way, said, "I wish I was in the dining-room of Fasque." An old laird very testily replied, "Ye'd soon be keckit out o' that," to which the other replied, not at all daunted, "Weel, weel, then, I wadna be far frae the kitchen." A quaint and characteristic reply, I

recollect from another farm-servant. My eldest brother had just been constructing a piece of machinery, which was driven by a stream of water running through the home farm-yard. There was a thrashing machine, a winnowing machine, and circular saw for splitting trees into paling, and other contrivances of a like kind. Observing an old man, who had long been about the place, looking very attentively at all that was going on, he said, "Wonderful things people can do now, Robby?" "Aye," said Robby, "indeed, Sir Alexander, I'm thinking if Solomon was alive now he'd be thought naething o'!" But, after all, it was amongst the old ladies that the great abundance of choice pungent Scottish expressions, such as you certainly do not meet with in these days, was to be sought. In their position of society, education either in England, or education conducted by English teachers, has so spread in Scottish families; intercourse with the south has been so increased, that all these colloquial peculiarities are fast disappearing. Some of the ladies of this older school felt some indignation at the

change which they lived to see was fast going on. One of them being asked if an individual whom she had lately seen was "Scotch," answered with some bitterness, "I canna say; ye a' speak sae *genteel* now that I dinna ken wha's Scotch." This class of ladies whom I refer to generally lived in provincial towns, never dreamt of going from home, and many of them had never been in London, or had even crossed the Tweed. But as Lord Cockburn's experience goes back further than mine, and as he had special opportunities of being acquainted with their characteristic peculiarities, I will quote his animated description at page 57 of his Memorials. "There was a singular race of old Scotch ladies. They were a delightful set—strong-headed, warm-hearted, and high-spirited—merry even in solitude; very resolute; indifferent about the modes and habits of the modern world, and adhering to their own ways, so as to stand out like primitive rocks above ordinary society. Their prominent qualities of sense, humour, affection, and spirit, were embodied in curious outsides, for they all dressed,

and spoke, and did exactly as they chose. Their language, like their habits, entirely Scotch, but without any other vulgarity than what perfect naturalness is sometimes mistaken for."—*Memorials of his Time*, by H. COCKBURN, p. 57.

This is a masterly description of a race now all but passed away. I have known several of them in my early days; and amongst them we must look for the racy Scottish peculiarities of diction and of expression which, with them, are also nearly gone. Lord Cockburn has given some illustrations of these peculiarities; and I have heard others, especially connected with Jacobite partialities, of which I say nothing, as they are in fact rather *strong* for such an occasion as the present. One, however, I heard lately as coming from a Forfarshire old lady of this class, which bears upon the point of "resolute" determination referred to in Lord Cockburn's description. She had been very positive in the disclaiming of some assertion which had been attributed to her, and on being asked if she had not written it, or something very like it, she replied, "Na, na; I never write onything

of consequence—I may deny what I say, but I canna deny what I write." Mrs. Baird of Newbyth, the mother of our distinguished countryman the late General Sir David Baird, was always spoken of as a grand specimen of the class. When the news arrived from India of the gallant but unfortunate action of '84 against Hyder Ali, in which her son, then Captain Baird, was engaged, it was stated that he and other officers had been taken prisoner and chained together two and two. The friends were careful in breaking such sad intelligence to the mother of Captain Baird. When, however, she was made fully to understand the position of her son and his gallant companions, disdaining all weak and useless expressions of her own grief, and knowing well the restless and athletic habits of her son, all she said was, "Lord pity the chiel that's chained to our Davy."*

* It is but due to the memory of "our Davy" to state that "the chiel" to whom he was chained bore high testimony to the kindness and consideration with which he was treated by Captain Baird. His companion was an elder brother of the late Sir John Hope of Pinkie, who died on service.

The ladies of this class had certainly no affectation in speaking of those who came under their displeasure, even when life and death were concerned. I had an anecdote illustrative of this characteristic, in a well-known old lady of the last century, Miss Johnstone of Westerhall. She had been extremely indignant that, on the death of her brother, his widow had proposed to sell off the old furniture of Westerhall. She was attached to it from old associations, and considered the parting with it little short of sacrilege. The event was, however, arrested by death, or, as she described the result, "the furniture was a' to be roupit, and we could nae persuade her. But before the sale cam on, in God's gude providence, she just clinkit aff hersell." Of fine acute sarcasm I recollect hearing an expression from rather a *modern* sample of the class, a charming character, and only to a degree answering to the description of the older generation. Conversation turned, and with just indignation, on the infidel remarks which had been heard from a certain individual, and on his irreverent treatment of Holy Scripture, all that this

lady condescended to say of him was, "Gey impudent of him, I think." A recorded reply of old Lady Perth to a French gentleman is quaint and characteristic. They had been discussing the respective merits of the cookery of each country. The Frenchman offended the old Scottish peeress by some disparaging remarks on Scottish dishes, and by highly preferring those of France. All she would answer was, "Weel, weel, some fouk like parritch, and some like paddocks."*

Of this older race—the ladies who were aged fifty years ago—the description is given by Lord Cockburn in strong and bold outline. I would pretend to nothing more than giving a few illustrative details from my own experience, which may assist the description by adding some practical realities to the picture. Several of them whom I knew in my early days certainly answered to many of those descriptions of Lord Cockburn. Their language and expressions had a zest and peculiarity which is gone, and which would not, I fear, do for modern life and times. I have spoken of

* Frogs.

Miss Erskine of Dun, which is near Montrose. She, however, resided in Edinburgh. But those I knew best had lived many years in the then retired society of a country town. Some were my own relations; and in boyish days (for they had not generally much patience with boys) were looked up to with considerable awe as very formidable personages. Their characters and modes of expression in many respects remarkably corresponded with Lord Cockburn's description. There was a dry Scottish humour which we fear their successors do not inherit. One of these Montrose ladies had many anecdotes told of her quaint ways and sayings. Walking in the street one day, slippery from frost, she fairly fell down. A young officer with much politeness came forward and picked her up, earnestly asking her at the same time, "I hope, ma'am, you are no worse?" to which she replied, looking at him very steadily, "Indeed, sir, I'm just as little the better." A few days after, she met her military supporter in a shop. He was a fine tall youth upwards, of six feet high, and by way of making some grate-

ful recognition for his late polite attention, she eyed him from head to foot, and as she was of the opinion of the old Scotch lady, who declared she "aye liked bonny fowk," she viewed her young friend with much satisfaction, but which she only evinced by the dry remark, "Od, ye're a lang lad; God gie ye grace." I had from a relative or intimate friend of two sisters of this school, well known about Glasgow, an odd account of what it seems from their own statement had passed between them at a country house, where they had attended a sale by auction. As the business of the day went on, a dozen of silver spoons had to be disposed of; and before they were put up for competition, they were, according to the usual custom, handed round for inspection by the company. When returned into the hands of the auctioneer, he found only eleven. In great wrath, he ordered the door to be shut, that no one might escape, and insisted on every one present being searched, to discover the delinquent. One of the sisters, in consternation, whispered to the other, "Esther, ye hae nae gotten the spune?"

to which the other replied, "Na; but I hae gotten Mrs. Siddons in my pocket." She had been struck by a miniature of the great actress, and quietly had pocketed it. The cautious reply of the sister was, "Then just drop her, Esther." One of the sisterhood, a connection of my own, had much of this dry Scottish humour. She had a lodging in the house of a respectable grocer; and on her niece most innocently asking her "If she was not very fond of her landlord," in reference to the excellence of her apartments and the attention he paid to her comfort. To the question she demurred on the score of its propriety by replying, "Fond of my landlord; that would be an *unaccountable* fondness." An amusing account was given of an interview and conversation between this lady and the provost of Montrose. She had demurred at paying some municipal tax with which she had been charged, and the provost was anxious to prevent her getting into difficulty on the subject, and kindly called to convince her of the fairness of the claim and the necessity of paying it. In his explanation he referred back

to his own bachelor days when a similar payment had been required from him. "I assure you, ma'am," he said, "when I was in your situation I was called upon in a similar way for this tax;" to which she replied in quiet scorn, "In my situation! an whan were ye in my situation—an auld maid living in a flat wi' an ae' lass?" But the complaints of such imposts were urged in a very humorous manner by another Montrose old lady Miss Helen Carnegy of Craigo; she hated paying taxes, and always pretended to misunderstand their nature. One day, receiving a notice of such payment signed by the provost (Thom), she broke out: "I dinna understand thae taxes; but I just think when Mrs. Thom wants a new gown, the provost sends me a tax paper!" The good lady's naïve rejection of the idea that she could be in any sense "fond of her landlord," already referred to, was somewhat in unison with a similar feeling recorded to have been expressed by the late Mr. Wilson, the celebrated Scottish vocalist. He was taking lessons from the late Mr. Finlay Dun, one of the most accomplished musicians of his day.

Mr. Dun had just returned from Italy, and, impressed with admiration of the deep pathos, sentiment, and passion of the Italian school of music, he regretted to find in his pupil so lovely a voice and so much talent losing much of its effect for want of feeling. Anxious, therefore, to throw into his friend's performance something of the Italian expression, he proposed to bring it out by this suggestion: "Now, Mr. Wilson, just suppose that I am your lady love, and sing to me as you could imagine yourself doing were you desirous of impressing her with your earnestness and affection." Poor Mr. Wilson hesitated, blushed, and under doubt how far such a personification even in his case was allowable, at last remonstrated, "Ay, Mr. Dun, ye forget I'm a married man!" A case has been reported of a country girl, however, who thought it possible there might be an excess in such scrupulous regard to appearances. On her marriage-day the youth to whom she was about to be united, said to her in a triumphant tone, "Weel, Jenny, have n't I been unco ceevil," alluding to the fact that during their whole courtship he

had never even given her a kiss. Her quiet reply was, "Ou, aye, man; senselessly ceevil."

One of these Montrose ladies and a sister lived together; and in a very quiet way they were in the habit of giving little dinner parties, to which occasionally they invited their gentlemen friends. However, gentlemen were not always to be had; and on one occasion, when such a difficulty had occurred, they were talking over the matter with a friend. The one lady seemed to consider such an acquisition almost essential to the having a dinner at all. The other, who did not see the same necessity, quietly adding, "But, indeed, our Jean thinks a man perfect salvation." There was occasionally a pawky semi-sarcastic humour in the replies of some of the ladies we speak of that was quite irresistible, of which I have from a friend a good illustration in an anecdote well known at the time. A late well-known member of the Scottish bar, when a youth, was somewhat of a dandy, and, I suppose, somewhat short and sharp in his temper. He was going to pay a visit in the country, and was making a great fuss about his preparing and the putting up

his habiliments. His old aunt was much annoyed at all this bustle, and stopped him by the somewhat contemptuous question, "Whaur's this you're gaun, Robby, that ye mak sic a grand wark about your claes?" The young man lost temper, and pettishly replied, "I'm going to the devil." "'Deed, Robby, then," was the quiet answer, "ye need na be sae nice, he'll just tak ye as ye are." Ladies of this class had a plain mode of expressing themselves on very serious subjects, which indicated their quaint power of description, rather than their want of feeling. Thus, of two sisters, when one had died, it was supposed that she had injured herself by an imprudent indulgence in strawberries and cream, of which she had partaken in the country. A friend was condoling with the surviving sister, and, expressing her sorrow, had added, "I had hoped your sister was to live many years." To which her relative rejoined—"Leeve! how could she leeve! she just felled hersell at Craigo wi' straeberries and cream!" However, she spoke with the same degree of coolness of her own decease. For when

her friend was comforting her in illness, by the hopes that she would, after winter, enjoy again some of their country spring butter, she exclaimed, without the slightest idea of being guilty of any irreverence, "Spring butter! by that time I shall be buttering in heaven." When really dying, and when friends were round her bed, she overheard one of them saying to another, "Her face has lost its colour; it grows like a sheet of paper." The quaint spirit even then broke out in the remark, "Then I'm sure it maun be *brown* paper." It was told of an old Miss Johnstone of Hawk Hill, that, when dying, a tremendous storm of rain and thunder came on, so as to shake the house. In the same quaint eccentric spirit, and with no thought of profane or light allusions, she looked up, and, listening to the storm, quietly remarked in reference to her departure, "Ech, sirs! what a nicht for me to be fleeing thro' the air!" A very strong-minded lady of the class, and, in Lord Cockburn's language, "indifferent about modes and habits," had been asking from a lady the character of a cook she was about to hire. The

lady naturally entered a little upon her moral qualifications, and described her as a very decent woman; the reply to which was, "Oh, d—n her decency; can she make good collops?"—an answer which would somewhat surprise a lady of Moray Place now, if engaged in a similar discussion of a servant's merits.

I had two grand-aunts living at Montrose at that time—two Miss Ramsays of Balmain. They were somewhat of the severe class—Nelly especially, who was an object rather of awe than of affection. She certainly had a very awful appearance to young apprehensions from the strangeness of her head gear. Ladies of this class Lord Cockburn has spoken of as having their peculiarities embodied in curious outsides, as they dressed, spoke, and did exactly as they chose. As a sample of such curious outside and dress, my good aunt used to go about the house with an immense pillow strapped over her head—warm but formidable. These two maiden grand-aunts had a niece on a visit, an aunt of mine, who had made what they considered a very imprudent

marriage, and where considerable poverty was likely to accompany the step she had taken. The poor niece had to bear many a slap directed to her improvident union, as for example: One day she had asked for a piece of tape for some work she had in hand as a young wife expecting to become a mother. Miss Nelly said with much point, "Aye, Kitty, ye shall get a bit knitting (*i.e.* a bit of tape). We hae a' thing; we're no married." It was this lady who, by an inadvertent use of a term, showed what was passing in her mind in a way which must have been quite transparent to the bystanders. At a supper which she was giving, she was evidently much annoyed at the reckless and clumsy manner in which a gentleman was operating upon a ham which was at table, cutting out great lumps, and distributing them to the company. The lady said, in a very querulous tone, "O, Mr. *Divet*, will you help Mrs. So and So?"—divet being a provincial term for a turf or sod cut out of the green, and the resemblance of it to the pieces carved out by the gentleman evidently having taken possession of

her imagination. Mrs. Helen Carnegy of Craigo was a thorough specimen of this class of old Scottish ladies. She lived in Montrose, and died in 1818, at the advanced age of 91. She was a Jacobite, and very aristocratic in her feelings, but on social terms with many burghers of Montrose, or Munross, as it was called. She preserved a very nice distinction of addresses, suited to different individuals in the town, according as she placed them in the scale of her consideration. She liked a party at quadrille, and sent out her servant every morning to invite the ladies required to make up the game, and her directions were graduated thus—"Nelly, you'll gang to Lady Carnegy's, and mak my compliments, and ask the *honour* of her ladyship's company, and that of the Miss Carnegies, to tea this evening; and if they canna come, ging to the Miss Mudies, and ask the *pleasure* of their company; and if they canna come, you may ging to Miss Hunter and ask the *favour* of her company; and if she canna come, ging to Lucky Spark and *bid her come.*"

At the beginning of this century, when the

fear of invasion was rife in all the sea-ports, it was proposed to mount a small battery at the water mouth by subscription, and she was waited on by a deputation from the town council. One of them having addressed her on the subject, she heard him with some impatience, and when he had finished, she said, "Are ye ane o' the town council?" He replied, "I have that honour, ma'am." To which she rejoined, "Ye may hae that *profit*, but honour ye hae nane;" and then to the point, she added, "But I've been tell't that ae day's wark o' twa or three men wad mount the cannon, and that it may be a' dune for twenty shillings, now there's twa punds to ye." The councillor pocketed the money and withdrew. On one occasion, as she sat in an easy chair, having assumed the habits and privileges of age, Mr. Mollison, the minister of the Established Kirk, called on her to solicit for some charity. She did not like being asked for money, and, from her Jacobite principles, she certainly did not respect the Presbyterian Kirk. When he came in, she made an inclination of the head, and he said,

"Don't get up, madam." She replied, "Get up! I wadna rise out of my chair for King George himsel, let abee a Whig minister."

It is a curious subject the various shades of Scottish dialect and Scottish expressions, commonly called Scotticisms. We mark in the course of fifty years how some disappear altogether; others become more and more rare, and of all of them we may say, I think, that the specimens of them are to be looked for every year more in the descending classes of society. What was common amongst peers, judges, lairds, advocates, and people of family and education, is now found in humbler ranks of life. There are few persons perhaps who have been born in Scotland, and who have lived long in Scotland, whom a nice southern ear might not detect as from the north. But it is by nicer shades of distinction than by those strong and characteristic marks of a Caledonian origin with which some of us have had practical acquaintance. I possess two curious, and now, I believe, rather scarce, publications on the prevalent Scotticisms of our

speaking and writing. One is entitled, "Scotticisms designed to Correct Improprieties of Speech and Writing," by Dr. Beattie of Aberdeen. The other is to the same purpose, and is entitled, "Observations on the Scottish Dialect," by the late Right Honourable Sir John Sinclair. Expressions which were common in their days, and used by persons of all ranks, are not known by the rising generation. Many amusing equivoques used to be current, arising from Scotch people in England applying terms and expressions in a manner rather surprising to Southern ears. Thus, the story was told of a public character dear to the memory of Scotland, Henry Dundas (Viscount Melville), applying to Mr. Pitt for the loan of a horse "the length of Highgate," a very common expression in Scotland at that time to signify the distance to which the ride was to extend. Mr. Pitt good humouredly wrote back to say that he was afraid he had not a horse in his possession quite so long as Mr. Dundas had mentioned, but he had sent the longest he had. I remember an honest Dandie Dinmont on a visit to Bath.

A lady, who had taken a kind charge of him, accompanied him to the theatre, and in the most thrilling scene of Kemble's acting, what is usually termed the dagger scene, she turned to the farmer with a whisper, "Is not that fine?" to which the confidential reply was, "Oh, mem, it's varra *enterteening!*" Enterteening expressing his idea of the *interesting*. Such phrases as were common fifty years ago, if occurring in conversation or correspondence now, would, to this generation, be unintelligible. There is a form of expression which has been a great favourite in Scotland, but which, in my recollection, has much gone out of practice,—I mean the frequent use of diminutives generally adopted either as terms of endearment or of contempt. Thus, it was very common to speak of a person whom you meant rather to undervalue, as a *mannie*, a *bodie*, a *bit bodie*, or a *wee bit mannie*. The Bailie in Rob Roy, when he intended to represent his party as persons of no importance, used the expression, "We are bits o Glasgow bodies." In a popular child's song, we have the endearing expression, "my

wee bit laddie." We have known the series of diminutives, as applied to the canine race, very rich in diminution. There is—1. A dog; 2. A doggie; 3. A bit doggie; 4. A wee bit doggie; and even 5. A wee bit doggiekie. We used to hear such expressions as those, which would not now be reckoned genteel: "Come in and get your bit dinner;" "I hope you are now settled in your ain bit housie." An admirable Scotch expression I recollect from one of the Montrose ladies before referred to. Her niece was asking a great many questions on some point concerning which her aunt had been giving her information, and coming over and over the ground, demanding an explanation how this had happened, and why something else was so and so. The old lady lost her patience, and at last burst forth: "I winna be back-speired noo, Pally Fullerton." Back-speired! how much more pithy and expressive than cross-examined! Another capital expression to mark that a person has stated a point rather under than over the truth, is "The less I lee," as in Guy Mannering, where the precentor exclaims to Mrs.

Mac-Candlish, "Aweel, gude wife, then the less I lee." We have found it a very amusing task collecting together a number of these phrases, and forming them into a connected epistolary composition. We may imagine the sort of puzzle it would be to a young person of the present day —one of what we may call the new school. We will suppose an English young lady, or an English educated young lady, lately married, receiving such a letter as the following from the Scottish aunt of her husband. We may suppose it to be written by a very old lady, who, for the last fifty years, has not moved from home, and has changed nothing of her early days. I can safely affirm that every word of it I have either seen written in a letter, or have heard in ordinary conversation :—

"*Montrose.**

"*My dear Niece*,—I am real glad to find my *nevy* has made so good a choice as to have secured you for his wife; and I am sure this step will add much to his comfort, and we *behove* to

* The Scotticisms are printed in Italics.

rejoice at it. He will now look forward to his evening at home, and you will be happy because you will never *want* him. It will be a great pleasure when you hear him in the *trance*, and wipe his feet upon the *bass*. But Willy is not strong, and you must look well after him. I hope you do not let him *snuff* so much as he did. He had a sister, poor thing, who died early. She was remarkably clever, and well read, and most intelligent, but was always uncommonly *silly*.* In the autumn of '40 she had a *sair host*, and was aye *speaking through a cold*, and at dinner never did more than to *sup a few family broth*. I am afraid she did not *change her feet* when she came in from the wet one evening. I never *let on* that I observed anything to be wrong; but I remember asking her to come and *sit upon* the fire. But she went out and did not *take* the door with her. She lingered till next spring, when she had a great *income*, and her parents were then too poor to take her south, and she died. I hope you will like the lassie Eppie we have sent you. She is a

* Delicate in health.

discreet girl, and comes of a decent family. She has a sister *married upon* a Seceding minister at Kirkcaldy. But I hear he expects to be *transported* soon. She was brought up in one of the hospitals here. Her father had been a *souter* and a *pawky chiel* enough, but was *doited* for years, and her mother was *sair dottled*. We have been greatly interested in the hospital where Eppie was *educate*, and intended getting up a bazaar for it, and would have asked you to help us, as we were most anxious to raise some additional funds, when one of the bailies died and left it 10,000 pounds, which was really a great *mortification*. I am not a good *hand of write*, and therefore shall stop. I am very tired, and have been *gantin* for this half hour, and even in correspondence gantin may be *smittin*. The *kitchen** is just coming in, and I *feel a smell of tea*, so when I get my *four hours*, that will refresh me and set me up again.

"I am your affectionate aunt,

"ISABEL DINGWALL."

* Tea urn.

This letter, then, we suppose written by a very old Forfarshire lady to her niece in England, and perhaps the young lady who received this letter might answer it in a style as strange to her aunt as her aunt's is to her, especially if she belonged to that lively class of our young female friends who indulge a little in phraseology which they have imbibed from their brothers or male cousins, who have perhaps, for their amusement, encouraged them in its use. The answer, then, might be something like this ; and without meaning to be severe or satirical upon our young lady friends, I may truly say that though I never heard from one young lady all these *fast terms*, I have heard the most of them separately from many:—

"*My dear Aunty*,—Many thanks for your kind letter and its enclosure. From my not knowing Scotch, I am not quite up to the whole, and some of the expressions I don't *twig* at all. Willie is absent for a few days, but when he returns home he will explain it ; he is quite awake on all such things. I am glad you are pleased

that Willie and I are now spliced. I am well aware that you will hear me spoken of in some quarters as a fast young lady, but don't believe them. We are certainly very happy at present. Willie comes home from the office every afternoon at five. We generally take a walk before dinner, and read and work if we don't go out; and I assure you we are very jolly. We don't know many people here yet. It is rather a swell neighbourhood; and if we can't get in with the nobs, depend upon it we will never take up with any society that is decidedly snobby. I daresay the girl you are sending will be very useful to us; our present one is a very slow coach. But we hope some day to sport buttons. My father and mother paid us a visit last week. The governor is well, and, notwithstanding years and infirmities, comes out quite a jolly old cove. He is, indeed, if you will pardon the partiality of a daughter, a regular brick. He says he will help us if we can't get on, and I make no doubt will in due time fork out the tin. I am busy working a cap for you, dear aunty; it is from a pretty

German pattern, and I think when finished will be quite a stunner. I have a shop in Regent Street, where I hire patterns and return them without buying them, which I think a capital dodge. I hope you will sport it for my sake the first tea-party you give.

"I have nothing particular to say, but am always "Your affectionate niece,

"ELIZA DINGWALL."

"*P.S.*—I am trying to break Willie off his horrid habit of taking snuff. I had rather see him take his cigar when we are walking. You will be told, I daresay, that I sometimes take a weed myself. It is not true, dear aunty."

Before leaving the question of change in Scottish expressions, it may be proper to add a few words on the subject of Scottish *dialects*—*i. e.*, on the differences which exist in different counties or localities in the Scottish tongue itself. These differences used to be as marked as different languages; of course they still exist

amongst the peasantry as before. The change consists in their gradual vanishing from the conversation of the educated and refined. The dialects with which I am most conversant, are the two which present the greatest contrast, viz., the Angus and the Aberdeen, or the slow and broad Scotch. The quick and sharp Scotch. Whilst the one talks of "buuts and shoon," the other calls the same articles "beets and sheen." With the Aberdonian, "what" is always "fat," or "fatten," "music" is "meesic," "brutes" are "breets;" "What are ye duing," of Southern Scotch, in Aberdeen would be "Fat are ye deein?" Thus when a Southerner mentioned the death of a friend, a sharp lady of the granite city asked, "Fat deed he o'?" which being utterly incomprehensible to the person asked, another Aberdonian lady kindly explained the question, and put it into language which she supposed *could* not be mistaken, as thus, "Fat did he dee o'?" Another ludicrous interrogatory occurred regarding the death of a Mr. Thomas Thomson. It appeared there were two cousins of this name,

both corpulent men. When it was announced that Mr. Thomas Thomson was dead, an Aberdeen friend of the family asked, "Fatten Thamas Thamson?" He was informed that it was a fat Thomas Thomson, upon which the Aberdeen query naturally arose, "Aye, but fatten fat Thamas Thamson?" The dialect and the local feelings of Aberdeen were said to have produced some amusement in London, when displayed by the lady of the Provost of Aberdeen when accompanying her husband going up officially to the capital. Some persons to whom she had been introduced, recommended her going to the opera as one of the sights worthy the attention of a stranger. The good lady, full of the greatness of her situation as wife of the provost, and knowing the sensation her appearance in public occasioned when in her own city, and supposing that a like excitement would accompany her with the London public, rather declined, under the modest plea, "Fat for should I gang to the opera, just to creat a confeesion."

I suppose no changes of the last half cen-

tury have been more remarkable than those which have taken place in the dialect and general manners of our Scottish judges. As a class of society, they have been, of course, *marked men*. Many were celebrated for humour, conviviality, and a degree of eccentricity of manners and habits; many of them equally remarkable, too, for acute and powerful minds—distinguished for profound knowledge of law, and ready tact in the application of its general principles. I have two anecdotes to show, that, both in social and judicial life, a remarkable change must have taken place amongst the "fifteen." I am assured that the following scene took place at the *table* of Lord Polkemmet, at a dinner party in his house. When the covers were removed, the dinner was seen to consist of veal broth, a roast fillet of veal, veal cutlets, a florentine (an excellent old Scottish dish composed of veal), a calf's head, calf's foot jelly. The worthy judge could not help observing a surprise on the countenances of his guests, and perhaps a simper on some; so he broke out in explanation: "Ou ay, it's a cauf; when we kill a beast we

just eat up ae side and doun the tither." The expressions he used to describe his own *judicial* preparations for the bench, were very characteristic: "Ye see I first read a' the pleadings, and then, after letting them wamble in my wame wi' the toddy twa or three days, I gie my ain interlocutor." For a moment suppose such anecdotes to be told now of any of our high legal functionaries. Imagine the feelings of surprise that would be called forth were the present Justice-Clerk to adopt such imagery in describing the process of preparing *his* legal judgment on a difficult case in his court!

Under this head of Scottish dialect, language, and expressions, we naturally introduce a short notice of a large and very interesting verbal question, the subject of our Scottish PROVERBIAL expressions. It is an old remark, that the characteristics of a people are always found in such sayings, and the expression of Bacon has been often quoted—"The genius, wit, and wisdom of a nation are discovered by their proverbs." Now, as there can be no doubt that there are proverbs exclu-

sively Scottish, and that as in them we find also many traits of Scottish character, and many peculiarities of Scottish thought and Scottish language, those which have been much made use of should have a place in our Scottish reminiscences. Indeed, proverbs are literally, in many instances, become *reminiscences*. They now seem to belong to that older generation whom we recollect, and who used them in conversation freely and constantly. To strengthen an argument, or illustrate a remark by a proverb, was then a common practice in conversation. Their use, however, is now considered vulgar, and their formal application is almost prohibited by the rules of polite society. Lord Chesterfield denounced the practice of quoting proverbs as a palpable violation of all grace in conversation. Notwithstanding all this, we acknowledge having much pleasure in recalling our national proverbial expressions. They are full of character, and we find amongst them important truths, expressed forcibly, wisely, and gracefully.

All nations have their proverbs, and a vast number of books have been written on the sub-

ject. We find, accordingly, that collections have been made of proverbs considered as belonging peculiarly to Scotland. The collections to which I have had access are the following :—

1. The fifth edition, by Balfour, of "Ray's Complete Collection of English Proverbs," in which is a separate collection of those which are considered Scottish Proverbs—1813. Ray professes to have taken these from Fergusson's work mentioned below.

2. A Complete Collection of Scottish Proverbs explained and made intelligible to the English Reader, by James Kelly, M.A., published in London 1721.

3. Scottish Proverbs gathered together by David Fergusson, sometime minister at Dunfermline, and put *ordine alphabetico* when he departed this life anno 1598. Edinburgh, 1641.

4. A Collection of Scots Proverbs, dedicated to the Tenantry of Scotland, by Allan Ramsay. This collection is found in the edition of his Poetical Works, 3 vols. post octavo, Edin. 1818,

but is not in the handsome edition of 1800. London, 2 vols. 8vo.*

5. Scottish Proverbs, collected and arranged by Andrew Henderson. With an Introductory Essay by W. Motherwell. Edin. 1832.

6. The Proverbial Philosophy of Scotland, an Address to the School of Arts, by William Stirling of Keir, M.P. Stirling and Edin. 1855.

The collection of Ray, the great English naturalist, is well known. The two first editions, published at Cambridge in 1670 and 1678, were by the author; subsequent editions were by other editors.

The work by James Kelly professes to collect Scottish proverbs only. It is a volume of nearly 400 pages, and contains a short explanation or commentary attached to each, and often parallel sayings from other languages. Mr. Kelly bears ample testimony to the extraordinary free use made of proverbs in his time by his countrymen and by himself. He says that "there were

* This was pointed out to me by our present Lord Provost, who kindly supplied me with the 3 vol. edition.

current in society upwards of 3000 proverbs, exclusively Scottish. He adds, "The Scots are wonderfully given to this way of speaking, and as the consequence of that, abound with proverbs, many of which are very expressive, quick, and home to the purpose; and, indeed, this humour prevails universally over the whole nation, especially among the better sort of the commonality, none of whom will discourse with you any considerable time, but he will affirm every assertion and observation with a Scottish proverb. To that nation I owe my birth and education; and to that manner of speaking I was used from my infancy, to such a degree that I became in some measure remarkable for it." This was written in 1721, and we may see from Mr. Kelly's account what a change has taken place in society as regards this mode of intercourse. Our author states that he has "omitted in his collection many popular proverbs which are very pat and expressive," and adds as his reason that "since it does not become a man of manners to use them, it does not become a man of my age and profession to write

them." What were Mr. Kelly's profession or age do not appear from any statements of his volume; but, judging by many proverbs which he has *retained*, those which consideration of years and of profession induced him to omit, must have been bad indeed, and unbecoming for *any* age or *any* profession.* The third collection by Mr. Fergusson is mentioned by Kelly as the only one which had been made before his time, and that he had not met with it till he had made considerable progress in his own collection. The book is now extremely rare, and fetches a high price. By the great kindness of the learned librarian, I have been permitted to see the copy belonging to the library of the Writers to the Signet. It is the first edition, and very rare. A quaint little thin volume, such as delight the eyes of true bibliomaniacs, unpaged, and published at Edinburgh, 1641—although on the title-page the proverbs are said to have been collected at Mr.

* Kelly's book is constantly quoted by Jamieson, and is, indeed, an excellent work for the study of good old Scotch

Fergusson's death, 1598.* There is no preface or notice by the author, but an address from the printer 'to the merrie, judicious, and discreet reader.'"

The proverbs, amounting to 945, are given without any comment or explanation; many of them are of a very antique cast of language; indeed, some would be to most persons quite unintelligible without a lexicon.

The printer, in this address "to the merrie, "judicious, and discreet reader," refers in the following quaint expressions to the author:— "'Therefore manie in this realme that hath heard of David Fergusson, sometime minister at Dunfermline, and of his quick answers and speeches, both to great persons and others inferiours, and hath heard of his proverbs which hee gathered together in his time, and now we put downe according to the order of the alphabet; and manie of all ranks of persons, being verie desirous to have the said proverbs, I have thought good to

* This probably throws back the collection to about the middle of the century.

put them to the presse for thy better satisfaction. . . . I know that there may be some that will say and marvell that a minister should have taken pains to gather such proverbs together; but they that knew his forme of powerfull preaching the word, and his ordinar talking, ever almost using proverbiall speeches, will not finde fault with this that hee hath done. And whereas there are some old Scottish words not in use now, bear with that, because if ye alter those words, the proverb will have no grace; and so, reccommending these proverbs to thy good use, I bid thee farewell."

I give a few of these verbatim, which my readers may amuse themselves by *construing* by the help of Jamieson's Dictionary.*

A year a nurish seven years a da.
Anes payit never cravit.

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* I may here mention, in case it should not be known to some of my readers, that an admirable abridged, but still very copious edition of Jamieson's Dictionary is now to be had for 6s. By a study of this volume a good knowledge might now be gained of the old Scottish dialect.

All wald have all, all wald forgive.
A gangand fit is aye getting.
All crakes all beares.
Bourd not wi bawtie.
Bread's house skaild never.
Crabbit was and cause had.
Dame deem warilie, ye wat na wha wytes yersel.
Efter lang mint never dint.
Fill fou and had fou makes a starkman.
He that crabbs without cause should mease without mends.
He is worth na weill that may not byde na wae.
Kame single, kame sair.
Kamesters are aye creeshie.
Let alone makes mony lurden.
Mony tynes the halfe marke whinger for the halfe pennie whange.
Na plie is best.
Reavers should not be rewers.
Sokand seall is best.
There mae madines nor makine.
Ye breid of the gouk, ye have not a ryme but ane.

The collection by Allan Ramsay is very good, and professes to correct the errors of some former collectors. The number of proverbs is about

700. Some proverbs in this collection I do not find in others, and one quality it possesses in a remarkable degree,—it is very Scotch. The language of the proverbial wisdom has the true Scottish flavour; not only is this the case with the proverbs themselves, but the dedication to the tenantry of Scotland, prefixed to the collection, is written in pure Scottish dialect. From this dedication I make an extract, which falls in with our plan of recording Scottish reminiscences, as Allan Ramsay there states the great value set upon proverbs in his day, and the importance which he attaches to them as teachers of moral wisdom, and as combining amusement with instruction. The prose of Allan Ramsay has, too, a spice of his poetry in its composition:—

"As naething helps our happiness mair than to hae the mind made up wi' right principles, I desire you, for the thriving an' pleasure of you and yours, to use your een an' len you lugs to these guid *auld says*, that shine wi' waled sense, and will as lang as the warld wags. Gar your bairns get them by heart; let them hae a place

amang your family bukes, an' may nere a window sole thro' the country be withoot them; on a spare hour, when the day is clear, behind a ruck, or on the green howm, draw the treasure frae your poutch, an' enjoy the pleasant companion. Ye happy herds, while your hirsels are feeding on the flowery braes, you may eithly mak yoursells maisters o' the hale some. How usefu' will it prove to you (wha hae sae few opportunities o' common clattering) whan ye forgather wi' your freends at kirk or market, banquet or bridal! By your proficiency you'll be able, in the proverbial way, to keep up the saul o' a conversation that is baith blythe an' usefu'."

Mr. Henderson's work is a compilation from those already mentioned. It is very copious, and the introductory essay contains some excellent remarks upon the wisdom and wit of Scottish proverbial sayings.

Mr. Stirling's address, like everything he writes, indicates a minute and profound knowledge of his subject, and is full of picturesque and just views of human nature. He attaches

much importance to the teaching conveyed in proverbial expressions, and recommends his hearers even still to collect such proverbial expressions as may yet linger in conversation, because, as he observes, "If it is not yet registered, it is possible that it might have died with the tongue from which you took it, and so have been lost for ever." "I believe," he adds, "the number of good old saws still floating as waifs and strays on the tide of popular talk to be much greater than might at first appear."

One remark is applicable to all these collections, viz., that out of so large a number there are many of them on which we have little grounds for deciding that they are *exclusively* Scottish. In fact, some are mere translations of proverbs adopted by many nations; some of universal adoption. Thus we have—

A burnt bairn fire dreads.
Ae swallow maks nae simmer.
Faint heart neer wan fair lady.
Ill weeds wax weel.
Mony smas mak a muckle.

O twa ills chuse the least.
Set a knave to grip a knave.
Twa wits are better than ane.
There's nae fule to an auld fule.
Ye canna mak a silk purse o' a sow's lug.
Ae bird i' the hand is worth twa fleeing.
Mony cooks neer made gude kail.

Of numerous proverbs such as these, some may or may not be original in the Scottish. Mr. Stirling remarks, that many of the best and oldest proverbs may be common to all—may have occurred to all. In our national collections, therefore, some of the proverbs recorded may be simply translations into Scotch of what have been long considered the property of other nations. Still, I hope, it is not a mere national partiality to say that many of the common proverbs *gain* much by such translation from other tongues. All that I would attempt now is, to select some of our more popular proverbial sayings, which many of us can remember as current amongst us, and were much used by the late generation in society, and to add a few from the collections I have

named, which bear a very decided Scottish stamp either in turn of thought or in turn of language.

I remember being much struck the first time I heard the application of that pretty Scottish saying regarding a fair bride. I was walking in Montrose, a day or two before her marriage, with a young lady, a connection of mine, when she was kindly accosted by an old friend, an honest fishwife of the town, "Weel, Miss Elizabeth, hae ye gotten a' yer claes ready;" to which the young lady modestly answered, "Oh, Janet, my claes are soon got ready." To which Janet replied in the old Scottish proverb, "Ay, weel, *a bonny bride's sune busket.*"* In the old collection, an addition less sentimental is made to this proverb, "*A short horse is sune wispet.*"†

To encourage strenuous exertions to meet difficult circumstances is well expressed by "*Setting a stout heart to a stay brae.*" This mode of expressing that the worth of a handsome woman outweighs even her beauty has a very Scottish character—"*She's better than she's bonny.*" The

* Attired. † Curried.

frequent evil to harvest operations from autumnal rains and fogs in Scotland, is well told in the saying, "*A dry summer ne'er made a dear peck.*"

There can be no question as to country in the following, which seems to express generally that persons may have the name and appearance of greatness without the reality—"*A' Stuarts are na sib* to the king.*"

There is an excellent Scottish version of the common proverb, "He that's born to be hanged will never be drowned,"—"*The water will never warr† the widdie,*" i.e., never cheat the gallows. This saying received a very naïve practical application during the anxiety and alarm of a storm. One of the passengers, a good simple-minded minister, was sharing the alarm that was felt round him, until, spying one of his parishioners, of whose ignominious end he had long felt persuaded, exclaimed to himself, "O, we are all safe now," and accordingly accosted the poor man with strong assurances of the great pleasure he had in seeing him on board.

* Related. † Outrun.

"*It's ill getting the breeks aff the Highland-man*," is a proverb that savours very strong of a Lowland Scotch origin. Having suffered loss at the hands of their neighbours from the hills, this was a mode of expressing the painful truth, that there was little hope of obtaining redress from those who had not the means of supplying it.

Proverbs connected with the bagpipes I set down as legitimate Scotch, as thus, "*Ye are as lang in tuning your pipes as anither would play a spring*,"* "You are as long in setting about a thing as another would be in doing it."

There is a set of Scottish proverbs which we may group together as containing one quality in common, and that in reference to the Evil Spirit, and to his agency in the world. This is a reference often, I fear, too lightly made; but I am not conscious of anything deliberately profane or irreverent in the following:—

"*The deil's nae sae ill as he's caaed.*" The most of people may be found to have some re-

* Tune.

deeming good point; applied in "Guy Mannering" by the Deacon to Gilbert Glossin, upon his intimating his intention to come to his shop soon for the purpose of laying in his winter stock of groceries.

To the same effect, *It's a sin to lee on the deil.* Even of the worst people, *truth* at least should be spoken.

He should hae a lang-shafted spune that sups kail wi' the deil. He should be well guarded and well protected that has to do with cunning and unprincipled men.

Lang ere the deil dee by the dyke-side. Spoken when the improbable death of some powerful person is spoken of.

Let ae deil ding anither. Spoken when two bad persons are at variance over some evil work.

The deil's bairns hae deil's luck. Spoken enviously when ill people prosper.

The deil's a busy bishop in his ain diocie. Bad men are sure to be active in promoting their own bad ends. A quaint proverb of this class I have been told of as coming from the remi-

niscence of an old lady of quality, to recommend a courteous manner to every one: *It's aye guid to be ceevil, as the auld wife said when she beckit* to the deevil.*

Raise nae mair deils than ye are able to lay. Provoke no strifes which ye may be unable to appease.

The deil's aye guid to his ain. A malicious proverb, spoken as if those whom we disparage were deriving their success from bad causes.

Ye wad do little for God an' the deevil was dead. A sarcastic mode of telling a person that fear, rather than love or principle, is the motive to his good conduct.

In the old collection already referred to, is a proverb which I quote unwillingly, and yet which I do not like to omit. It is doubtful against whom it took its origin, whether as a satire against the decanal order in general, or against some obnoxious dean in particular: *The Deil an' the Dean begin wi' ae letter. When the Deil has the Dean the kirk will be the better.*

* Curtsied.

The deil's gane ower Jock Wabster, is a saying which I have been accustomed to in my part of the country from early years. It expresses generally misfortune or confusion, but I am not quite sure of the *exact* meaning, or who is represented by Jock Wabster. It was a great favourite with Sir Walter Scott, who quotes it twice in Rob Roy. Allan Ramsay introduces it in the Gentle Shepherd to express the misery of married life when the first dream of love has past away :—

"*The 'Deil gaes o'er Jock Wabster,' hame grows hell,*
When Pate misca's ye mair than tongue can tell."

It's ill to wauken sleeping dogs. It is bad policy to rouse dangerous and mischievous people, who are for the present quiet.

It is na mair pittie to see a woman greit nor to see a goose go barefit. A harsh and ungallant reference to the facility with which the softer sex can avail themselves of tears to carry a point.

A Scots mist will weet an Englishman to the skin. A proverb evidently of Caledonian origin, arising from the frequent complaints made by

English visitors of the heavy mists which hang about our hills, and which are found to annoy the Southern traveller as it were downright rain.

Keep your ain fish guts to your ain sea maws. This was a favourite proverb with Sir Walter Scott when he meant to express the policy of first considering the interests that are nearest home. The saying savours of the fishing population of the east coast.

A yule feast may be done at Pasch. Festivities, although usually practised at Christmas, need not, on suitable occasions, be confined to any season.

It's better to sup wi a cutty than want a spune. Cutty means anything short, stumpy, and not of full growth; frequently applied to a short-handled horn spoon. As Meg Merrilees says to the bewildered Dominie, "If ye dinna eat instantly, by the bread and salt, I'll put it down your throat wi' the *cutty spune*."

"*Fules mak feasts and wise men eat 'em*, my Lord." This was said to a Scottish nobleman on

his giving a great entertainment, and who readily answered, "Ay, and *Wise men make proverbs and fools repeat 'em.*"

A green yule makes a fat kirk-yard. A shocking mode of expressing that mild weather at Christmas is unhealthy. The truth of the proverb is as questionable as the phraseology.

Wha will bell the cat? The proverb is used in reference to a proposal for accomplishing a difficult or dangerous task, and alludes to the fable of the poor mice proposing to put a bell about the cat's neck that they might be apprised of his coming. The historical application is well known. When the nobles of Scotland proposed to go in a body to Stirling to take Spence, the favourite of James the Third, and hang him, the Lord Gray asked, "It is well said, but wha will bell the cat?" The Earl of Angus accepted the challenge, and effected the object. To his dying day he was called Archibald Bell-the-Cat.

Ye hae tint the tongue o' the trump. "Trump" is a Jew's harp. To lose the tongue of it is to lose what is essential to its sound.

Meat and mass hinders nae man. Needful food, and suitable religious exercises, should not be spared under greatest haste.

Ye faund it whar the highlantman fand the tangs. A hit at our mountain neighbours, who occasionally took from the Lowlands, as having found something that was never *lost*.

His head will ne'er fill his father's bonnet. A picturesque way of expressing that the son will never equal the influence and ability of his sire.

His bark is waur nor his bite. A good-natured apology for one who is good-hearted and rough in speech.

Do as the cow of Forfar did, tak a standing drink. This proverb relates to an occurrence which gave rise to a law-suit and a whimsical legal decision. A woman in Forfar, who was brewing, set out her tub of beer to cool. A cow came by and drank it up. The owner of the cow was sued for compensation, but the bailies of Forfar, who tried the case, acquitted the owner of the cow on the ground that the farewell drink, called in the Highlands the *dochan doroch*

or stirrup cup, taken by the guest standing at the door, was never charged, and as the cow had taken but a standing drink outside, it could not, according to Scottish usage, be chargeable. Sir Walter Scott has humorously alluded to this circumstance in the notes to Waverley, but has not mentioned it as the subject of an old Scotch proverb.

Bannocks are better nor nae kind o' bread. Evidently Scottish. Better have oatmeal cakes to eat than be in want of wheaten loaves.

Folly is a *bonny dog.* Meaning, I suppose, that many are imposed upon by the false appearances and attractions of vicious pleasures.

The e'ening brings a' hame, is an interesting saying, meaning, that the evening of life, or the approach of death, softens many of our political and religious differences. I do not find the proverb in the older collections, but Mr. Stirling justly calls it " a beautiful proverb, which, lending itself to various uses, may be taken as an expression of faith in the gradual growth and spread of large-hearted Christian charity, the noblest result

of our happy freedom of thought and discussion." A similar graceful and moral saying inculcates an acknowledgment of gratitude for the past favours which we have enjoyed when we come to the close of the day or the close of life—

"*Ruse* the fair day at e'en.*"

Let him tak a spring on his ain fiddle. Spoken of a foolish and unreasonable person. We will for the present allow him to have his own way. Bailie Nicol Jarvie quotes the proverb with great bitterness, when he warns his opponent that *his* time for triumph will come ere long,—"Aweel, aweel, sir, you're welcome to a tune on your ain fiddle; but see if I dinna gar ye dance till't afore it's dune."

The kirk is meikle, but you may say mass in ae end o't. This intimates, where something is alleged to be too much, that you need take no more than what you have need for. I heard the proverb used in this sense by Sir Walter Scott at his own table. His son had complained of some quaighs which Sir Walter had produced for a

* Praise.

dram after dinner, that they were too large. His answer was, "Well, Walter, as my good mother used to say, if the kirk is ower big, just sing mass in the quire." Here is another reference to kirk and quire—*He rives* the kirk to theik† the quire.* Spoken of unprofitable persons, who, in the English proverb, "Rob Peter to pay Paul."

The king's errand may come the cadger's gate yet. A great man may need the service of a very mean one.

The maut is aboon the meal. His liquor has done more for him than his meat. The man is drunk.

Mak a kirk and a mill o't. Turn a thing to any purpose you like; or rather, spoken sarcastically, Take it, and make the best of it.

Like a sow playing on a trump. No image could be well more incongruous than a pig performing on the Jew's harp.

Mair by luck than gude guiding. His success is due to his fortunate circumstances, rather than to his own discretion.

He's not a man to ride the water wi'. A

* Tears. † Thatch.

common Scottish saying to express you cannot trust such an one in trying times. May have arisen from the districts where fords abounded, and the crossing them was dangerous.

He rides o' the riggin o' the kirk. The riggin being the top of the roof, the proverb used to be applied to those who carried their zeal for church matters to the extreme point.

Leal heart never leed, well expresses that an honest loyal disposition will scorn, under all circumstances, to tell a falsehood.

A common Scottish proverb, *Let that flee stick to the wa'*, has an obvious meaning,—"Say nothing more on that subject." But the derivation is not obvious. In like manner, the meaning of *He that will to Cupar maun to Cupar*, is clearly that if a man is obstinate, and bent upon his dangerous course, he must take it. But why Cupar? and whether is it the Cupar of Angus or the Cupar of Fife?

Kindness creeps where it canna gang, prettily expresses that where love can do little, it will do that little though it cannot do more.

In my part of the country a ridiculous addition used to be made to the common Scottish saying, *Mony a thing's made for the penny*, *i. e.* many contrivances are thought of to get money. The addition is, "As the old woman said when she saw a black man,"—taking it for granted that *he* was an ingenious and curious piece of mechanism made for profit.

Bluid is thicker than water, is a proverb which has a marked Scottish aspect, as meant to vindicate those family predilections to which, as a nation, we are supposed to be rather strongly inclined.

There's aye water whare the stirkie drouns.* Where certain effects are produced, there must be some causes at work—a proverb used against those who are disposed to underrate the influence averred by another.

Better a finger aff than aye waggin'. This proverb I remember as a great favourite with many Scotch people. Better experience the worst than have an evil always pending.

Cadgers are aye cracking o' crook-saddles,† has a

* A young bullock. † Saddle for supporting panniers.

very Scottish aspect, and signifies that professional men are very apt to talk too much of their professions.

I will conclude this notice of our proverbial reminiscences, by adding a cluster of Scottish proverbs, selected from an excellent article on the general subject in the North British Review of February 1858. The reviewer designates these as "broader in their mirth and more caustic in their tone" than the moral proverbial expressions of the Spanish and Italian :—

A blate cat maks a proud mouse.*
Better a toom† house than an ill tenant.
Jouk‡ and let the jaw§ gang by.
Mony ane speirs the gate‖ he kens fu' weel.
The tod¶ ne'er sped better than when he gaed his ain errand.
A wilfu' man should be unco wise.
He that has a meikle nose thinks ilka ane speaks o't.
He that teaches himsel has a fule for his maister.
It is an ill cause that the lawyer thinks shame o'.
*Lippen** to me, but look to yoursell.*

* Shy. † Empty. ‡ Stoop down. § Wave.
‖ The way. ¶ Fox. ** Trust to.

Mair whistle than woo, as the souter said when shearing the soo.

Ye gae far about seeking the nearest.

Ye'll no sell yer hen in a rainy day.

Ye'll mend when ye grow better.

*Ye're nae chicken for a' your cheepin.**

I have now given quite sufficient specimens to convince those who may not have given attention to the subject, how much of wisdom, knowledge of life, and good feeling, are contained in these aphorisms which compose the mass of our Scottish proverbial sayings. No doubt to many of my younger readers proverbs are little known, and to all they are becoming more and more matters of reminiscence. I am quite convinced that much of the old quaint and characteristic Scottish talk which we are now endeavouring to recall, depended on a happy use of those abstracts of moral sentiment. And this feeling will be confirmed when we call to mind how often those whom we ourselves admired of the old Scottish school of character, availed themselves of the use of its proverbial philosophy.

* Chirping.

V. The portion of our subject, which we proposed under the head of "Reminiscences of Scottish Stories of Wit or Humour," yet remains to be considered. This is closely connected with the question of Scottish dialect and expressions; indeed, on some points hardly separable, as the wit to a great extent proceeds from the quaint and picturesque modes of expressing it. But here we are met by a difficulty. On high authority it has been declared that no such thing as wit exists amongst us. What has no existence can have no change. We cannot be said to have lost a quality which we never possessed. Many of my readers are no doubt familiar with what Sydney Smith declared on this point, and certainly on the question of wit he must be considered an authority. He used to say (I am almost ashamed to repeat it), "It requires a surgical operation to get a joke well into a Scotch understanding. Their only idea of wit which prevails occasionally in the north, and which under the name of WUT is so infinitely distressing to people

of good taste, is laughing immoderately at stated intervals." Charles Lamb had the same notion, or I should rather say the same prejudice, about Scottish people not being accessible to wit; and he tells a story of what happened to himself in corroboration of the opinion. He had been asked to a party, and one object of the invitation had been to meet a son of Burns. When he arrived, Mr. Burns, or Colonel Burns, had not made his appearance, and in the course of conversation regarding the family of the poet, Lamb, in his lack-a-daisical kind of manner, said, "I wish it had been his brother who is coming," upon which two or three Scotchmen present with one voice exclaimed, "That's impossible, for *he's* dead." Now, there will be dull men and matter-of-fact men everywhere who do not take a joke or enter into a jocular allusion; but surely, as a general remark, this is far from being a natural quality of our country. Sydney Smith and Charles Lamb say so. But at the risk of being considered presumptuous, I will say I think them entirely mistaken. I should say

that there was, on the contrary, a strong *connection* between the Scottish temperament, and, call it if you like, humour if it is not wit.—And what is the difference? My readers need not be afraid that they are to be led through a labyrinth of metaphysical distinctions between wit and humour. I have read Dr. Campbell's dissertation on the difference in his philosophy of rhetoric, I have read S. Smith's own two lectures, but I confess I am not much the wiser. Professors of rhetoric, no doubt, must have such discussions, but when you wish to be amused by the thing itself, it is somewhat disappointing to be presented with metaphysical analysis. It is like instituting an examination of the glass and cork of a champagne bottle, and a chemical testing of the wine. In the very process the volatile and sparkling draught which was to delight the palate, has become like ditch water, vapid and dead. What I mean is, that, call it wit or humour, or what you please, there is a school of Scottish pleasantry, amusing and characteristic beyond all other. Don't talk of its nature or the qualities of which it is composed;

enjoy its quaint and amusing flow of oddity and fun; as we may for instance suppose it to have flowed on that eventful night so joyously described by Burns :—

> "The souter tauld his queerest stories,
> The landlord's laugh was ready chorus."

Or we may think of the delight it gave the good Mr. Balwhidder, when he tells, in his Annals of the Parish, of some such story, that it was a "jocosity that was just a kittle to hear." When I speak of changes in such Scottish humour which have taken place, I refer to a particular sort of humour, and I speak of the sort of feeling that belongs to Scottish pleasantry,—which is sly, and cheery, and pawky. It is, undoubtedly, a humour that depends a good deal upon the vehicle in which the story is conveyed. If, as we have said, our quaint dialect is passing away, and our national eccentric points of character, we must expect to find much of the peculiar humour allied with them to have passed away also. In other departments of wit and repartee, and acute hits at men and things, Scotchmen (whatever S. Smith may have

said to the contrary) are equal to their neighbours, and, so far as I know, may have gained rather than lost. But this peculiar humour of which I now speak, has not, in our day, the scope and development which were permitted to it by the former generation. Where the tendency exists, the exercise of it is kept down by the usages and feelings of society. For examples of it (in its full force at any rate), we must go back to a race who are departed. One remark, however, has occurred to me in regard to the specimens we have of this kind of humour, viz., that they do not always proceed from the wit or the cleverness of any of the individuals concerned in them. The amusement comes from the circumstances, from the concurrence or combination of the ideas, and in many cases from the expressions which describe the facts. The humour of the narrative is unquestionable, and yet no one has tried to be humorous. In short, it is the *Scottishness* that gives the zest. The same ideas differently expounded might have no point at all. There is, for example, something highly original in the notions of celestial mechanics

entertained by an honest Scottish Fife lass regarding the theory of comets. Having occasion to go out after dark, and having observed the brilliant comet of last year (1858), she ran in with breathless haste to the house, calling on her fellow-servants to "Come oot and see a new star that hasna got its tail cuttit aff yet!" Exquisite astronomical speculation! Stars, like puppies, are born with tails, and in due time have them docked. Take an example of a story where there is no display of any one's wit or humour, and yet it is a good story, and one can't exactly say why:—An English traveller had gone on a fine Highland road so long, without having seen an indication of fellow travellers, that he became astonished at the solitude of the country, and no doubt before the Highlands were so much frequented as they are in our time, the roads had a very striking aspect of solitariness. Our traveller at last coming up to an old man breaking stones, he asked him if there was any traffic in this road—was it at *all* frequented; "Ay," he said, "it's no ill at that, there was a cadger body

yestreen, and there's yoursel the day." No English version of the story could have half such amusement, or half so quaint a character. An answer, even still more characteristic, is recorded to have been given by a countryman to a traveller. Being doubtful of his way, he inquired if he were on the right road to Dunkeld. With some of his national inquisitiveness about strangers, the countryman asked his enquirer where he came from; offended at the liberty, as he considered it, he sharply reminded the man that where he came from was nothing to him; but all the answer he got, was the quiet rejoinder, "Indeed, it's just as little to me whar ye'r gain'." A friend has told me of an answer highly characteristic of this dry and unconcerned quality which he heard given to a fellow traveller. A gentleman sitting opposite to him in the stage-coach at Berwick, complained bitterly that the cushion on which he sat was quite wet. On looking up to the roof he saw a hole through which the rain descended copiously, and at once accounted for the mischief. He called for the coachman, and in great wrath

reproached him with the evil under which he suffered, and pointed to the hole which was the cause of it. All the satisfaction, however, that he got was the quiet unmoved reply, "Ay, mony a ane has complained o' *that* hole." Another anecdote I heard from a gentleman who vouched for the truth, which is just a case where the narrative has its humour, not from the wit which is displayed, but from that dry matter-of-fact view of things peculiar to some of our countrymen. The friend of my informant was walking in a street of Perth, when, to his horror, he saw a workman fall from a roof where he was mending slates, right upon the pavement. By extraordinary good fortune he was not killed, and, on the gentleman going up to his assistance, and exclaiming with much excitement, "God bless me, are you much hurt," all the answer he got was the cool rejoinder, "On the contrary, sir." A similar matter of fact answer was made by one of the old race of Montrose humorists. He was coming out of church, and in the press of the kirk *skailing*, a young man thoughtlessly

trod on the old gentleman's toe, which was tender with corns. He hastened to apologise, saying, "I am very sorry, sir; I beg your pardon." The only acknowledgment of which was the dry answer, "And ye've as muckle need, sir."

The national humorous quality of which we now speak is occasionally latent in characters where we should hardly expect it, and is often developed in very early life. To a distinguished member of the Church of Scotland I am indebted for an excellent story of quaint child humour, which he had from the lips of an old woman who related the story of herself—When a girl of eight years of age, she was taken by her grandmother to church. The parish minister was not only a long preacher, but, as the custom was, delivered two sermons on the Sabbath day, and thus saved the parishioners the two journeys to church. Elizabeth was sufficiently wearied before the close of the first discourse, but when, after singing and prayer, the good minister opened the Bible, read a second text, and prepared to give a second sermon, the young girl, being both tired

and hungry, lost all patience, and cried out to her grandmother, to the no small amusement of those who were so near as to hear her, "Come awa, granny, and gang hame, this is a lang grace and nae meat." The Duke of Buccleuch told me an anecdote of an answer very quaintly Scottish, given to his grandmother by a farmer of the old school. There had been a dinner of some of the tenantry in the time of Duke Henry. His Duchess (the last descendant of the Dukes of Montague) always appeared at table on such occasions, and did the honours with that dignity and affable kindness for which she was so remarkable. Abundant hospitality was exercised towards the guests. The duchess observed one of the farmers supplied with boiled beef from a noble round, and, with marked attention, proposed that he should add a supply of cabbage; on his declining, the duchess good humoredly remarked, "Why, boiled beef and greens seem so naturally to go together, I wonder you don't take it." The honest farmer replied, "Ay, but your grace maun alloo it's a verra *windy* vegetable," in delicate

allusion to the flatulent quality of the esculent. Amongst the lower orders, humour is found, occasionally, very rich in mere children, and I recollect a remarkable illustration of this early native humour, occurring in a family in Forfarshire, where I used, in former days, to be very intimate. A wretched woman, who used to traverse the country as a beggar or tramp, left a poor, half starved little girl by the road-side, near the house of my friends. Always ready to assist the unfortunate, they took charge of the child, and as she grew a little older, they began to give her some education, and taught her to read. She soon made some progress in reading the Bible, and the native odd humour, of which we speak, began soon to show itself. On reading the passage, which began, "Then David rose," etc., the child stopped, and looked up knowingly, to say, "I ken wha that was," and, on being asked what she could mean, she confidently said, "That's David Rowse, the pleuchman." And again reading the passage, where the words occur, "He took Paul's girdle," the child said with much

confidence, "I ken what he took that for," and on being asked to explain, replied at once, "To bake 's bannocks on,"—"girdle" being, in the north, the name for the iron plate hung over the fire, for making oat cakes or bannocks.

A facetious and acute friend of mine, who rather leans to the S. Smith view of Scottish wit, declares that all our humorous stories are about lairds, and about lairds who are drunk. Of such stories there are certainly not a few. One of the best belonged to my part of the country, and to many persons I should perhaps apologise for introducing it at all. The story has been told of various parties and localities, but no doubt the genuine laird was a laird of Balnamoon, and that the locality was a wild tract of land, not far from his place called Munrimmon Moor. Balnamoon had been dining out in the neighbourhood, where, by mistake, they had put down to him after dinner cherry brandy, instead of port wine, his usual beverage. The rich flavour and strength so pleased him, that, having tasted it, he would have nothing else. On rising from table, therefore,

the laird would be more affected by his drink than if he had taken his ordinary allowance of port. His servant Harry, or Hairy,* was to drive him home in a gig or whisky, as it was called, the usual open carriage of the time. On crossing the moor, however, whether from greater exposure to the blast, or from the laird's unsteadiness of head, his hat and wig came off and fell upon the ground. Harry got out to pick them up and restore them to his master. The laird was satisfied with the hat, but demurred at the wig. "It's no my wig, Hairy, lad; it's no my wig," and refused to have anything to do with it. Hairy lost his patience, and anxious to get home, remonstrated with his master, "Ye'd better tak it, sir, for there's nae waile o' wigs on Munrimmon Moor." The humour of the argument is exquisite, putting to the laird in his unreasonable objection, the sly insinuation that in such a locality, if he did not take *this* wig, he was not likely to find

* In corroboration of the genuineness and authenticity of the story, I am assured by a correspondent that he knows the name of the servant was *not* Hairy; but I have mislaid the reference.

another. Then what a rich expression, "waile o' wigs." In English what is it? "A choice of perukes." There is nothing in the English comparable to the "waile o' wigs." Since the last edition, however, of these Reminiscences, I have received an amusing sequel to the story—after the affair of the wig had been settled, and the laird had consented to return home. When the whisky drove up to the door, Hairy, sitting in front, told the servant who came to "tak out the laird." No laird was to be seen; and it appeared that he had fallen out on the moor without Hairy observing it. Of course, they went back, and, picking him up, brought him safe home. A neighbouring laird having called a few days after, and having referred to the accident, Balnamoon quietly added, "Indeed, I maun hae a lume* that'll *had in*." The late Lady Dalhousie, mother, I mean, of the present distinguished Peer, used to tell a characteristic anecdote of her day. But here on mention of the name Christian, Countess of Dalhousie, may I pause a moment

* A vessel.

to recal the memory of one who was a very remarkable person. She was, for many years, to me and mine, a sincere and true and valuable friend. By an awful dispensation of God's providence, she died *instantaneously* under my roof in 1839. Lady Dalhousie was eminently distinguished for a fund of the most varied knowledge, for a clear and powerful judgment, for acute observation, a kind heart, a brilliant wit. The story was thus:—A Scottish judge, somewhat in the predicament of the Laird of Balnamoon, had dined at Coalstoun with her father Charles Brown, an advocate, and son of George Brown, who sat in the Supreme Court as a Judge with the title of Lord Coalstoun. The party had been convivial, as we know parties of the highest legal characters often were in those days. When breaking up, and going to the drawing-room, one of them, not seeing his way very clearly, stepped out of the dining-room window, which was open to the summer air. The ground at Coalstoun sloping off from the house behind, the worthy judge got a great fall, and rolled down the bank.

He contrived, however, as tipsy men generally do, to regain his legs, and was able to reach the drawing-room. The first remark he made was an innocent remonstrance with his friend the host, "Od, Charlie Brown, what gars ye hae sik lang steps to your *front* door." On Deeside, where many original stories had their origin, I recollect hearing several of an excellent and worthy, but very simple-minded man, the Laird of Craigmyle. On one occasion, when the beautiful and clever Jane, Duchess of Gordon was scouring through the country, intent upon some of those electioneering schemes which often occupied her fertile imagination and active energies, she came to call at Craigmyle, and having heard that the laird was making bricks on the property, for the purpose of building a new garden wall, with her usual tact she opened the subject, and kindly asked, "Well, Mr. Gordon, and how do your bricks come on?" Good Craigmyle's thoughts were much occupied with a new leather part of his dress, which he had lately constructed, so, looking down on his nether garments, he said in pure Aberdeen dialect, "Muckle

obleeged to yer Grace, the breeks war sum ticht at first, but they are deeing weel eneuch noo." The last laird of Macnab, before the clan finally broke up and emigrated to Canada, was a well known character in the country, and, being poor, used to ride into Aberdeen on a most wretched horse, which gave occasion to many gibes at the laird's expense. A young wit, by way of playing him off, asked him in a contemptuous tone, "Is that the same horse you had last year, Laird?" "Na," said the Laird, brandishing his whip in the interrogator's face in so emphatic a manner as to preclude further questions, "Na; but it's the same *whup*." In those days, as might be expected, people were not nice in expressions of their dislike to persons or measures. If there be not more charity in society, there is certainly more courtesy. I have, from a friend, an anecdote illustrative of this remark, in regard to feelings exercised towards an unpopular laird. In the neighbourhood of Bamff, in Forfarshire, the seat of the Ramsays of that ilk, was the proprietor of Corb—a family passed away, and the estate

merged into neighbouring property. This laird was intensely disliked in the neighbourhood. Sir George Ramsay was, on the other hand, universally popular and respected. On one occasion, Sir George, in passing a morass in his own neighbourhood, had missed the road and fallen into a bog to an alarming depth. To his great relief, he saw a passenger coming along the path, which was at no great distance. He called loudly for his help, but the man took no notice. Poor Sir George felt himself sinking, and redoubled his cries for assistance; all at once the passenger rushed forward, carefully extricated him from his perilous position, and politely apologised for his first neglect of his appeal, adding, as his reason, "Indeed, Sir George, I thought it was Corb!" evidently meaning that *had* it been Corb, he must have taken his chance for him. Of another laird whom I heard often spoken of in old times, an anecdote was told strongly Scotch. Our friend had much difficulty (as many worthy lairds have had) in meeting the claims of those two woful periods of the year called with us in Scotland the

"tarmes." He had been employing for some time as workman a stranger from the south on some house repairs, of the not uncommon name in England of Christmas. His servant early one morning called out at the laird's door in great excitement that Christmas had run away, and nobody knew where he had gone. He turned in his bed with the earnest ejaculation, "I only wish he had taken Whitsunday and Martinmas along with him!" I have heard of an amusing scene between a laird celebrated for his saving propensities, and a wandering sort of Edie Ochiltree, a well-known itinerant, who lived by his wits and what he could pick up in his rounds amongst the houses of lairds and farmers. One thrifty laird having seen him sit down near his own gate to examine the contents of his poke or wallet, conjectured that he had come from the house, and so he drew near to see what he had carried off. As he was keenly investigating the mendicant's spoils, his quick eye detected some bones on which there remained more meat than should have been allowed to leave his kitchen. Accordingly

he pounced upon the bones, and declared he had been robbed, and insisted on his returning to the house and giving back the spoil. The beggar was, however, prepared for the attack, and sturdily defended his property, boldly asserting, "Na, na, laird, these are no Todbrae banes; these are Inch-Byre banes, and nane o' your honour's,"—meaning that he had received these bones at the house of a neighbour of a more liberal character. But the beggar's professional discrimination between the bones of the two mansions, and his pertinacious defence of his own property, would have been most amusing to a bystander.

I have, however, a reverse story, in which the beggar is quietly silenced by the proprietor. A Lord Lovat of generations back, well-known for his frugal habits, had just picked up a small copper coin in his own avenue, and had been observed by one of the itinerating mendicant race, who grudged the transfer of the piece into the peer's pocket, exclaimed, "O, gie't to me, my lord;" to which the quiet answer was, "Na, na; fin' a fardin for yersel, puir body."

From a friend and near relative, a minister of the Established Church of Scotland, I used to hear many characteristic stories. He had a curious vein of this sort of humour in himself, besides what he brought out of others. One of his peculiarities was a mortal antipathy to the whole French nation, whom he frequently abused in no measured terms. At the same time he had great relish of a glass of claret, which he considered the prince of all social beverages. So he usually finished off his anti-gallican tirades with the reservation, "But the bodies brew the braw drink." He lived amongst his own people, and knew well the habits and peculiarities of a race gone by. He had many stories connected with the pastoral relation between minister and people, and all such stories are curious, not merely for their amusement, but from the illustration they afford us of that peculiar Scottish humour which we are now describing. He had himself, when a very young boy, before he came up to the Edinburgh High School, been at the parochial school where he resided, and which, like many others at that period, had a considerable reputation

for the skill and scholarship of the master. He used to describe school scenes rather different, I suspect, from school scenes in our day. One boy on coming late explained that the cause had been a regular pitched battle between his parents, with the details of which he amused his school-fellows, and he described the battle in vivid and Scottish Homeric terms, "And eh, as they faucht and they faucht," adding, however, with much complacency, "But my minnie dang, she did tho'." As I have said, he was a clergyman of the Established Church, and had many stories about ministers and people, arising out of his own pastoral experience, or the experience of friends and neighbours. He was much delighted with the not very refined rebuke which one of his own farmers had given to a young minister who had for some Sundays occupied his pulpit. The young man dined with the farmer in the afternoon when services were over, and his appetite was so sharp, that he thought it necessary to apologise to his host for eating so substantial a dinner—"You see," he said, "I am always very hungry after

preaching." The old gentleman, not much admiring the youth's pulpit ministrations, having heard this apology two or three times, at last replied sarcastically, "Indeed, sir, I'm no surprised at it, considering the trash that comes aff your stamach in the morning." There was a story for which he had names of place and persons, but I forget whether it was of his own experience. I think it was his own; at any rate it was thus:—A lad had come for examination, previous to his receiving his first communion. The pastor, knowing that his young friend was not very profound in his theology, and, not wishing to discourage him, or keep him from the table unless compelled to do so, began by asking what he thought a safe question, and what would give him confidence. So he took the Old Testament, and asked him, in reference to the Mosaic law, how many commandments there were. After a little thought he put his answer in the modest form of a supposition, and replied cautiously, "Aiblins * a hunner." The clergyman was

* Perhaps.

vexed, and told him such ignorance was intolerable, that he could not proceed in examination, and that the youth must wait and learn more; so he went away. On returning home he met a friend on his way to the manse, and, on learning that he, too, was going to the minister for examination, shrewdly asked him, "Weel, what will ye say noo if the minister speers hoo mony commandments there are?" "Say! why, I shall say ten to be sure." To which the other rejoined with great triumph, "Ten! Try ye him wi' ten! I tried him wi' a hunner, and he wasna satisfeed."

I have received from Miss Stirling Graham of Duntrune a kind contribution to the present volume. I have deemed it best to put her communications together, and I introduce them here. They contain an account of an extraordinary Scottish superstition, and of an equally extraordinary mode of acting under its influence. They describe two remarkable Scottish characters, and contain some Forfarshire traditional sayings. Those who have read a volume lately printed for circulation amongst her friends, containing an

account of some of those "Mystifications" with which she charmed the Edinburgh society of her early days, will know how exquisite is Miss Stirling Graham's appreciation of Scottish humour, and how complete her knowledge of Scottish character.

There lived here in Gayfield Square two charming old maiden ladies—Mrs. Mary Smith and Miss Peggy Fyffe. They had a pet superstition, for which they paid, between them, threepence a week to a street porter, that he might be the first to tell them it was Monday, deeming it unlucky to hear the day first mentioned by a woman. They laid each three-halfpence on the hall table on Sunday night, and early next morning the man called to wish them a happy Monday, and pick up his reward. Once when Miss Fyffe was confined to bed, her attendant inquired what she would like for dinner, for it was *Monday*, and there would be no fish to be got. "Wae worth you," Miss Fyffe exclaimed, "do ye no ken that I pay a man to tell me it's Monday?" When Miss Fyffe died, Mrs. Smith refused to pay any

more than her weekly dole of three-halfpence. Miss Douglas of Brigton being present, the maid whispered, "Never mind, I'll just pay it out of the house-money!" When Miss Douglas returned home, she related this strange superstition to a party of friends, who enjoyed it as a joke; but her sister, Mrs. Hunter, looked rather serious, saying, "Well, I am not the least superstitious, but I do not like to be told by a woman it is Monday!"

Mrs. Graham of Balmure had a faithful old servant called Saunders Hay, who had a ready word on every subject. Hearing Miss Graham appeal to her sister, if she did not think her gown rather too long, might it not be as well to have it shortened? "Na, na," quoth Saunders; "it's very weel; clip nor pare ony mare at it." One Sunday evening Saunders and his wife had a serious quarrel. Jean said she thought David (King David) hadna taen much pains when he *metred* the Psalms; on which Saunders flew in a passion at her ignorance, and reminded her that it was George Buchanan who metred the Psalms.

Mr. Taylor, well known in London as having the management of the opera house, had his father up from Aberdeen to visit him and see the wonders of the city. When the old man returned home, his friends inquired what sort of business his son carried on? "Ou," said he (in reference to the operatic singers and the corps de ballet), "He just keeps a curn* o' wirricows† and weanies,‡ and gars them fissle,§ and loup, and mak murgeons‖ to the great fouk." The same matter-of-fact old Aberdonian, when some one remarked, "It's a fine day," dryly responded, "And fa's findin' faut wi't?"

Another Aberdonian, describing the dress of a lady whom he had seen at a ball the night before, said, "She had a tappie-towrie on her head, and a diamond necklace on her neck; and she had stockings and shoon, for I saw *them*, but for onything mair I dinna ken."

Mrs. Mathew, who farmed Westhall some twenty years ago, was an original homely person.

* A number. † Dressed up creatures. ‡ Children.
§ Make whistling noises. ‖ Distorted gestures.

Her maiden name was Anderson, the descendant of a race of sensible well-to-do people. On inquiring if she was connected with the provost of Dundee, she replied, with a look of great contempt, "Na, na, his father cam out o' Forgan. He was wont to ca' my father the *man Anderson*, but, my certie, he wasna fit to be linings to the man Anderson. Our land is very dear, and so greedy for muck, diel burst it; and my grieve is a souple, double, seceder rascal."

A farmer in Strathmore being invited to dine at Belmont, had the precaution to ask the butler if there was any particular ceremony to be observed at table, and was told there was only one thing his lord and lady disliked, and that was the drinking of healths. The good man determined to be on his good behaviour; so, when raising the wine to his lips, he called out, "Here's to a' the company's gude health, except my Lord Privy Seal and Lady Betty Mackenzie."

Mr. Miller of Ballumbie had occasion to find fault with one of his labourers who had been improvident and known better days. He was

digging a drain, and he told him if he did not make better work he should turn him off. The man was very angry, and throwing down his spade, called out in a tone of resentment, "Ye are ower pridefu', Davie Miller; since I mind ye i' the warld when ye had neither cow nor ewe." "Very well," replied Mr. Miller, mildly, "I remember you when you had both."

A neighbour called one day upon Lord Dunsinnan when he was spending his law-holidays on his estate in Strathmore. The dinner consisted of broth and two boiled fowls. Just as they were sitting down to table another neighbour walked in, and another boiled fowl was placed before him; and after some excellent claret, and pleasant discourse, the visitors mounted their horses to ride home, pondering, by the way, over the singularity of the dinner, and wondering what the servants got; they had the curiosity to ask them, to which they replied, "Ilka ane had a hen boiled in broth."

The late Lord Airlie, remarking to one of his tenants that it was a very wet season, "Indeed,

my lord," replied the man, "I think the spiggot's out a'thegither."

A countryman, from the Braes of Angus, came to tell the minister that his wife was brought to bed, and they wished him to christen the bairn. The minister, very pompous, inquired whether the child was male or female? "It's neither, sir," was the answer. "Then, in the name of goodness," said the reverend man, "what is it?" "Ou, it's just a bit queanie!"

An old beggar woman was a frequent visitor at Duntrune. She was called Bobbins, a nick-name which she did not particularly like, as it had reference to some intromissions with her neighbour's yarn. She was seized with a cold, and confined to bed. The neighbours sent donations of various delicacies, one of them a jar of black-currant jam, which she emptied into a wooden dish, and ate it all up with a large horn-spoon, making wry faces all the time, and took credit to herself for the same, by remarking, "That mony ane wadna sup it, for the leddy maks her jeil wi' the caff (chaff) amang't." Then

she drank six bottles of beer and half a bottle of whisky, and fell asleep for eight-and-forty hours, at the end of which time she awoke quite recovered!

An old cadger, the personification of contentment, used to sit sound asleep on his cart, trusting himself and his fish to the discretion of the horse. One day he arrived at Duntrune nearly frozen to death, and was carried into the kitchen to be thawed. In due time he got something to eat, and a glass of warm toddy to drink, which so cheered his heart, that he exclaimed, "Oh! sirs, I am happy wi' ye. I am just ae eild wi' the auld king (George III.), and I daur say I'm as happy a man as he is. The leddy will be takin' a glass to hersel when she comes in frae her walk, for I am sure naebody could hae it in the hoose and no tak it."

The two following cases furnish specimens of the old Scottish domestics:—There was a waggish old man cook at Duntrune for sixty years, and during three generations of its owners. In 1795, when his master was skulking, John

found it necessary to take another service, and hired himself to Mr. Wedderburn of Pearsie; but he wearied to get back to Duntrune. One day the Laird of Pearsie observed him putting a spit through a peat (it may have been for the purpose of cleaning it), be that as it may, the laird inquired the reason for so doing, and John replied, "Indeed, sir, I am just going to roast a peat, for fear I forget my trade." At the end of two years he returned to Duntrune, where he continued to exercise his calling till near the close of life.

One day he sent up a roast goose for dinner which he or some one had despoiled of a leg before it came to table; on which his master summoned him from the kitchen to inquire who had taken the leg off the goose. John replied that all the geese here had but ae leg. In corroboration of his assertion, he pointed to a whole flock before the window, who were, happily, sitting asleep on one leg, with a sentinel on the watch. The laird clapped his hands and cried *whew*, on which they got up on both legs, and

flew off. But John, no way discomfited, told his master if he had cried whew to the one on the table, it would most likely have done the same! It is not to be believed that John had ever read Boccaccio, or that he ever heard of the Venetian cook, Chichibio, who played the same trick with the crane's leg; but it is possible that two artists in the same vocation, even with four centuries rolling between them, may have originated similar ideas—therefore we may safely give John Fraser credit for his invention. He died in Dundee, where his master paid the last tribute of respect to his memory, and laid his head in the grave beside the family he had served so faithfully.

When the funeral moved from his house, the widow, in the exuberance of gratification, called aloud to her neighbours to come and see the "beautiful burial."

There lived in Arbroath a very remarkable old woman named Meg Matthew, a generous, noble, and disinterested character, and her conduct to the friendless and the orphans should be recorded. She had been a servant to Mr. Cruick-

shank, the minister of Kinnel. The minister and his wife both died during her service, and left three children totally unprovided. Upon which Meg engaged an attic room in the Market-gate of Arbroath, and carried the two boys and the little girl with her, where she span to maintain them, and she begged from those whom she thought could afford it, their schooling and clothing. She did not ask like a mendicant, but said she must have such and such things for her bairns; and when the boys were to be fitted out, she would call at various places, and tell the lady of the house that she must have linen, and that the young ladies must set to work and make so many shirts for Jamie or Willy.

Situations were procured for the boys; one went to the West Indies, the other to Montreal, where he married and had a family, whom he left in good circumstances.

In the course of years the other returned with a competency, and died in Arbroath.

Meg herself accompanied the boys to London to witness their departure, and she saw the king

(George III.), whom she described as being "just like ony ither husbandman wi' a stand o' blue claes."

Betsy Cruickshank obtained a ladies-maid's place in Hopetoun House, where she remained till her marriage with Mr. Haldane, a stocking manufacturer in Haddington. He left her a widow in comfort, and she was much respected, and died in a good old age. Meg was the theme of many conversations between the young ladies of Hopetoun and their attendant. Her name and fame were even well-known among the servants.

One day a housemaid ran into the room calling out, "Miss Cruickshank, if your Meg be in the body, she is now coming up the road."

It was Meg herself, arrived on foot from Arbroath; and rapturously she was welcomed by the whole family. She would remain only a short time, declining all favours for herself; and when they offered to shew her through the house, she replied, "Na, na, I'm no gaen to big the marrow of it."

She returned home to her spinning-wheel in

her solitary little room, and from her homely wrinkled face and rather unsocial manner, she was looked upon by coarse-minded people in the light of a witch, or one that was in compact with the devil. Her dress was a short gown over a woollen petticoat, a striped wincey apron, and a *close white mutch* with a black hood over it. She span a coarse yarn from the waist with both hands. I remember her in her last illness, her death, and seeing her laid in her coffin ; and now, looking through the long vista of the present century, and far down into the past, I venerate the singularly beautiful character of that dear old woman, and noble Scottish heart.

Her dust lies within the cemetery of the old abbey of Arbroath.

> " Embalmed in memory with things that are holy,
> By the spirit that is undying."

About this time Arbroath embraced a very primitive society.

The players visited it once a year for a few weeks, and acted in the hay loft of the inn.

A very good set they were; stars sometimes from the metropolis, with grand names, such as Willoughby and Mandeville.

Old ladies would take their knitting, and one more eccentric than the others, would carry her muslin caps wet with starch, to prepare them for being ironed, or, as she said, "to make them ready to be *goosed*;" and she clapped them between the palms of her hands when cheering the performers.

An Episcopal clergyman married the widow of a blind gentleman, who fitted herself out with such a trousseaux as made people *wonder*, for she said, "I was married to a moudiewart last, but now I am getting a husband who can *see* me."

Some people, not very scrupulous, put bad coppers into the plate at the chapel door on Sundays, with which the good lady paid her losses at cards during the week, and so, in the end, it came to be known through whose veins the *ill bawbees* circulated.

At one of her parties she remarked that she had never been able to procure any good gin since the Dutch took Flushing. "Wifie, wifie," inter-

posed the minister, "Flushing is in Holland." "Weel," she replied, "I'm sure I dinna care whether it be in France or Ireland !!!"

We find in the conversation of old people frequent mention of parochial functionaries, now either become commonplace, and like the rest of the world, or removed altogether, and shut up in poor-houses or mad-houses—I mean the parish idiot, eccentric, or somewhat crazy, useless, idle creatures, who used to wander from house to house, and sometimes made very shrewd, sarcastic, and humorous remarks upon what was going on in the parish. They used to take great liberty of speech regarding the conduct and disposition of those with whom they came in contact; and many odd sayings were traditionary in the country localities, which emanated from the parish idiots. I have a strong kindly feeling towards this class of imperfectly intelligent, but often perfectly cunning beings: partly I believe from recollections of early associations in boyish days, with some of those Davy Gellatleys. I have therefore

preserved all the anecdotes with which I have been favoured, where their odd sayings and indications of a degree of mental activity have been recorded. Parish idiots seem to have had a partiality for getting near the pulpit in church, and their presence there was accordingly sometimes annoying to the preacher and the congregation; as at Maybole, when Dr. Paul, now of St. Cuthbert's, was minister in 1823, the idiot John McLymont had been in the habit of standing so close to the pulpit door as to overlook the Bible and pulpit board. When required, however, by the clergyman, to keep at a greater distance, and not *look in upon the minister*, he got intensely angry and violent. He threatened the minister, "Sir, bæeby (maybe) I'll come further," meaning to intimate that perhaps he would, if much provoked, come into the pulpit altogether. This, indeed, actually took place on another occasion, and the tenure of the ministerial position was justified by an argument of a most amusing nature. The circumstance, I am assured, happened in a parish of the north. The clergyman, on coming into church, found the pulpit occupied

by the parish idiot. The authorities had been unable to remove him without more violence than was seemly, and therefore waited for the minister to dispossess Tam of the place he had assumed. "Come down, sir, immediately," was the peremptory and indignant call; and on Tam being unmoved, it was repeated with still greater energy. Tam, however, very confidentially replied, looking down from his elevation, "Na, na, minister! just ye come up wi' me. This is a perverse generation, and faith they need us baith." It is curious to mark the sort of glimmering of sense, and even of discriminating thought displayed by persons of this class; as an example, take a conversation held by this same idiot, John McLymont, with Dr. Paul, whom he met some time after. He seemed to have recovered his good humour, as he stopped him, and said, "Sir, I would like to speer, a question at ye on a subject that's troubling me." "Well, Johnie, what is the question?" To which he replied, "Sir, is it lawful at any time to tell a lee?" The minister desired to know what Johnie himself thought

upon the point. "Weel, sir," said he, "I'll no say but in every case it's wrang to tell a lee; but," added he, looking archly at me and giving me a wink, "I think there are *waur lees than others.*" "How," said I, "Johnie?" and then he instantly replied, with all the simplicity of a fool, "to *keep down a din for instance.* I'll no say but a man does wrang in telling a lee to keep down a din, but I'm sure he does not do half sae muckle wrang as a man who tells a lee to kick up a devilment o' a din." This opened a question not likely to occur to such a mind. Mr. Usher, minister of Mincraven in Morayshire, narrates a curious example of want of intelligence combined with a power of cunning to redress a fancied wrong, shewn by a poor natural of the parish, who had been seized with a violent inflammatory attack, and was in very great danger. The medical attendant saw it necessary to bleed him, but he resisted, and would not submit to it. At last the case became so hopeless that they were obliged to use force, and, holding his hands and feet, the doctor opened a vein and drew blood,

upon which the poor creature, struggling violently, bawled out, "O doctor, doctor! you'll kill me! you'll kill me! and depend upon it, the first thing I'll do when I get to the other world will be to *report you to the Board of Supervision there, and get you dismissed.*"

I have received two anecdotes illustrative both of the occasional acuteness of mind, and of the sensitiveness of feeling, occasionally indicated by persons thus situated. A well-known idiot, Jamie Fraser, belonging to the parish of Lunan, in Forfarshire, quite surprised people sometimes by his replies. The congregation of his parish church had for some time distressed the minister by their habit of sleeping in church. He had often endeavoured to impress them with a sense of the impropriety of such conduct, and one day when Jamie was sitting in the front gallery wide awake, when many were slumbering round him, the clergyman endeavoured to awaken the attention of his hearers by stating the fact, saying, "You see even Jamie Fraser, the idiot, does not fall asleep as so many of you are doing."

Jamie not liking, perhaps, to be thus designated, coolly replied, "An' I hadna been an idiot I wad ha' been sleeping too." Another of these imbeciles, belonging to Peebles, had been sitting at church for sometime listening attentively to a strong representation from the pulpit of the guilt of deceit and falsehood in Christian characters. He was observed to turn red, and grow very uneasy, until at last, as if wincing under the supposed attack upon himself personally, he roared out, "Indeed, minister, there's mair leears in Peebles than me." There is a story of one of those half-witted creatures of a different character from the humorous ones already recorded, and which I have often thought of as exceedingly affecting, and with which I will conclude my collection. The story is traditionary in a country district, and I am not aware of its being ever printed. A poor boy, of this class, who had evidently manifested a tendency towards religious and devotional feelings, asked permission from the clergyman to attend the Lord's Table and partake of the holy communion with the other members of the congre-

gation (whether Episcopalian or Presbyterian I do not know). The clergyman demurred for sometime, under the impression of his mind being incapable of a right and due understanding of the sacred ordinance. But observing the extreme earnestness of the poor boy, at last gave consent, and he was allowed to come. He was much affected, and all the way home was heard to exclaim, "Oh! I hae seen the pretty man." This referred to his seeing the Lord Jesus, whom he had approached in the sacrament. He kept repeating the words, and went with them on his lips to rest for the night. Not appearing at the usual hour for breakfast, when they went to his bedside they found him dead! The excitement had been too much—mind and body had given way—and the half-idiot of earth awoke to the glories and the bliss of his Redeemer's presence.

The relative whom I have mentioned had many stories of a parochial fraternity of a more authorised character than the parish idiots, but whose eccentricities also have in a great measure given way before the assimilating spirit of the times. I

mean the old Scottish beadle, or betheral, as he used to be called. Some classes of men are found to have that nameless but distinguishing characteristic of figure and aspect which marks out particular occupations and professions of mankind. This was so much the case in the betheral class, that an old lady observing a well-known judge and advocate walking together in the street, remarked to a friend as they passed by, "Dear me, Lucy, wha are they twa *beddle-looking* bodies?" They were often great originals, and I suspect must have been somewhat given to convivial habits, from a remark I recollect of the late Baron Clerk Rattray, viz., that in his younger days he had hardly ever known a perfectly sober betheral. However this may have been, they were, as a class, remarkable for quaint humour, and for being shrewd observers of what was going on. I have heard of an occasion where the betheral made his wits to furnish an apology for his want of sobriety. He had been sent round the parish by the minister to deliver notices at all the houses of the catechising which was to precede the preparation for receiving the

communion. On his return it was quite evident that he had partaken too largely of refreshment since he had been on his expedition. The minister reproached him for this improper conduct. The betheral pleaded the pressing *hospitality* of the parishioners. The clergyman did not admit the plea, and added, "Now, John, I go through the parish, and you don't see me return fou as you have done." "Ay, minister," rejoined the betheral, with much complacency, "but then aiblins ye're no sae popular i' the parish as me." My relative used to tell of one of these officials receiving with much ceremony a brother betheral from a neighbouring parish, who had come with the minister thereof about to preach for some special occasion. After service, the betheral of the stranger clergyman felt proud of the performance of the appointed duty, and said in a triumphant tone to his friend, "I think our minister did weel; ay, he gars the stour flee out o' the cushion." To which the other rejoined, with a calm feeling of superiority, "Stour out o' the cushion! hout, our minister, sin he cam wi' us, has dung the guts

out o' twa bibles." Another description I have heard of an energetic preacher more forcible than delicate—"Eh, our minister had a great power o' watter, for he grat and spat, and swat like mischeef." An obliging anonymous correspondent has sent me a story of a functionary of this class whose pride was centred not so much in the performance of the minister as of the precentor. He states that he remembers an old beadle of the church which was called "Haddo's Hole" (and sometimes the "Little Kirk"), in Edinburgh, whose son occasionally officiated as precentor. The son was not very well qualified for the duty, but the father had a high opinion of the son's vocal powers. In those days there was always service in the church on the Tuesday evenings; and when the father was asked on such occasions, "Who's to preach to-night?" his reply used to be, "I divna ken wha's till preach, but ma son's for till precent." This class of functionaries were very free in their remarks upon the preaching of strangers, who used occasionally to occupy the pulpit of their church—the city betherals speak-

ing sometimes in a most condescending manner of clergy from the provincial parishes. As, for example, a betheral of one of the large churches in Glasgow, criticising the sermon of a minister from the country who had been preaching in the city church, characterised it as "Gude coorse country wark." These stories are usually of an old standing. But a more recent one has been told me of a betheral in a royal burgh much decayed from former importance, and governed by a feeble municipality of old men who continued in office, and in fact constituted rather the shadow than the substance of a corporation. A clergyman from a distance having come to officiate in the parish church, the betheral, knowing the terms on which it was usual for the minister officiating to pray for the efficiency of the local magistracy, quietly cautioned the clergyman before service that, in regard to the town-council there, it would be quite out of place for him to pray that they should be a "terror to evil doers," because, as he said, the "poor auld bodies could be nae terror to onybody." I had an anecdote from a friend of a

reply from a betheral to the minister *in* church, which was quaint and amusing from the shrewd self-importance it indicated in his own acuteness. The clergyman had been annoyed during the course of his sermon by the restlessness and occasional whining of a dog, which at last began to bark outright. He looked out for the beadle, and directed him very peremptorily, "John, carry that dog out." John looked up to the pulpit, and with a very knowing expression said, "Na, na, sir; I'se just mak him gae out on his ain four legs." I have another story of canine misbehaviour in church. A dog was present during the service, and in the sermon the worthy minister was in the habit of speaking very loud, and, in fact, when he got warmed with his subject, of shouting almost to the top of his voice. The dog who, in the early part, had been very quiet, became quite excited, as is not uncommon with some dogs when hearing a noise, and from whinging and whining, as the speaker's voice rose loud and strong, at last began to bark and howl. The minister, naturally much annoyed at the

interruption, called upon the betheral to put out the dog, who at once expressed his readiness to obey the order, but could not resist the temptation to look up to the pulpit, and to say very significantly, "Ay, ay, sir; but indeed it was yersel began it." There is a dog story connected with Reminiscences of Glasgow (see Chambers' Journal, March 1855), which is full of meaning. The bowls of rum punch which so remarkably characterised the Glasgow dinners of last century and the early part of the present, it is to be feared, made some of the congregation given to somnolency on the Sundays following. The members of the town-council often adopted Saturday for such meetings; accordingly, the Rev. Mr. Thom, an excellent clergyman, took occasion to mark this propensity with some acerbity. A dog had been very troublesome, and disturbed the congregation for some time, when the minister at last gave orders to the beadle, "Take out that dog; he'd wauken a Glasgow magistrate."

It would be impossible in these reminiscences to omit the well-known and often-repeated anecdote

connected with an eminent divine of our own country, whose works take a high place in our theological literature. The story to which I allude was rendered popular throughout the kingdom, some years ago, by the inimitable mode in which it was told or rather acted by the late Charles Matthews. But Matthews was wrong in the person of whom he related the humorous address. I have assurance of the parties from a friend, whose father, a distinguished clergyman in the Scottish church at the time, had accurate knowledge of the whole circumstances. The late celebrated Dr. Macknight, a learned and profound scholar and commentator, was nevertheless, as a preacher, to a great degree, heavy, unrelieved by fancy or imagination; an able writer, but a dull speaker. His colleague Dr. Henry, well known as the author of a history of England, was, on the other hand, a man of great humour, and could not resist a joke when the temptation came upon him. On one occasion when coming to church, Dr. Macknight had been caught in a shower of rain, and

entered the vestry soaked with wet. Every means were used to relieve him from his discomfort; but as the time drew on for divine service he became much distressed, and ejaculated over and over, "Oh, I wush that I was dry; do you think I'm dry; do you think I'm dry eneuch noo?" His jocose colleague could resist no longer, but, patting him on the shoulder, comforted him with the sly assurance, "Bide a wee, Doctor, and ye'se be dry eneuch when ye get into the pu'pit." Another quaint remark of the facetious Doctor to his more formal colleague has been preserved by friends of the family. Dr. Henry, who, with all his pleasantry and abilities, had himself as little popularity in the pulpit as his coadjutor, had been remarking to Dr. Macknight what a blessing it was that they two were colleagues in one charge, and continued dwelling on the subject so long, that Dr. M., not quite pleased at the frequent reiteration of the remark, said that it certainly was a great pleasure to himself, but he did not see what great benefit it might be to the world. "Ah," said Dr. Henry, "an' it hadna been for that, there wad hae been *twa* toom* kirks

* Empty.

this day." I am indebted to a gentleman, himself also a distinguished member of the Scottish church, for an authentic anecdote of this learned divine, and which occurred whilst Dr. Macknight was the minister of Maybole. One of his parishioners, a well-known humorous blacksmith of the parish, who, no doubt, thought that the Doctor's learned books were rather a waste of time and labour for a country pastor, was asked if his minister was at home. The Doctor was then busy bringing out his laborious and valuable work, his "Harmony of the Four Gospels." "Na, he's gane to Edinburgh on a verra useless job." On being asked what this useless work might be which engaged his pastor's time and attention, he answered, "He's gane to mak four men agree wha ne'er cast out." The good-humoured and candid answer of a learned and rather long-winded preacher of the old school, always appeared to me quite charming. The good man was far from being a popular preacher, and yet he could not reduce his discourses below the hour and a half. On being asked, as a gentle

hint, of their possibly needless length, if he did not feel *tired* after preaching so long, he replied, "Na, na, I'm no tired;" adding, however, with much naïvete, "But, Lord, hoo tired the fouk whiles are."

The late good, kind-hearted Dr. David Dickson was fond of telling a story of a Scottish termagant of the days before kirk session discipline had passed away. A couple were brought before the court, and Janet, the wife, was charged with violent and undutiful conduct, and with wounding her husband, by throwing a three-legged stool at his head. The minister rebuked her conduct, and pointed out its grievous character, by explaining that just as Christ was head of his church, so the husband was head of the wife; and therefore, in assaulting *him*, she had, in fact, injured her own body. "Weel," she replied, "it's come to a fine pass gin a wife canna kame her ain head;" "Aye, but Janet," rejoined the minister, "a three-legged stool is a thief-like bane kame to scart yer ain head wi'!"

Our object in bringing up and recording anec-

dotes of this kind is to elucidate the sort of humour we refer to, and to show it as a humour of *past* times. A modern clergyman *could not* now adopt the tone and manner of the older class of ministers—men not less useful and beloved, on account of their odd Scottish humour, which indeed suited their time. Could a clergyman, for instance, now come off from the trying position in which we have heard of a northern minister being placed, and by the same way through which he extricated himself with much good nature, and quiet sarcasm? A young man sitting opposite to him in the front of the gallery had been up late on the previous night, and had stuffed the cards with which he had been occupied into his coat pocket. Forgetting the circumstance, he pulled out his handkerchief, and the cards all flew about. The minister simply looked at him, and remarked, "Eh man, your psalm buik has been ill bund." A still better story of a quiet pulpit rebuke is traditionary in the "east nuik of Fife," and told of a seceding minister, Mr. Shirra, a man well remembered by some of the older gene-

ration for many excellent and some eccentric qualities. An officer of a volunteer corps on duty in the place, and very proud of his fresh uniform, had come to Mr. Shirra's church, and walked about as if looking for a seat, but in fact to show off his dress, which he saw was attracting attention from some of the less grave members of the congregation. He came to his place, however, rather quickly, on Mr. Shirra quietly remonstrating, "O man, will ye sit down, and we'll see your new breeks when the kirk's dune." This same Mr. Shirra was well known from his quaint, and, as it were, parenthetical comments which he introduced in his reading of Scripture, as, for example, on reading from the 116th Psalm, "I said in my haste all men are liars," he quietly observed, "Indeed, Dauvid, an' ye had been i' this parish ye might hae said it at your leesure."

The following anecdotes, collected from different contributors, are fair samples of the quaint and original character of Scottish ways and expressions now becoming more and more matters

of reminiscence :—A poor man came to his minister for the purpose of intimating his intention of being married. As he expressed, however, some doubts on the subject, and seemed to hesitate, the minister asked him if there were any doubts about his being accepted. No, that was not the difficulty ; but he expressed a fear that it might not be altogether suitable, and he asked whether, if he were once married, he could not (in case of unsuitability and unhappiness) get *un*married. The clergyman assured him that was impossible ; if he married it must be for better and worse ; that he could not go back upon the step. So thus instructed he went away. After a time he returned, and said he had made up his mind to try the experiment, and he came and was married. Ere long he came back very disconsolate, and declared it would not do at all ; that he was quite miserable, and begged to be unmarried. The minister assured him it was impossible, and urged him to put away the notion of anything so absurd, which, indeed, must be a suggestion of the Evil One, and that if he would resist the devil

he would flee from him. "Na, na," said the poor man, "that's no true wi' this deevil, for whan I resist her, instead o' fleeing from me she just flees at me."

A faithful minister of the gospel being one day engaged in visiting some members of his flock, came to the door of a house where his gentle tapping could not be heard for the noise of contention within. After waiting a little he opened the door, and walked in, saying, with an authoritative voice, "I should like to know who is the head of this house." "Weel, sir," said the husband and father, "if ye sit doon a wee, we'll maybe be able to tell ye, for we're just tryin' to settle that point."

A minister in the north returning thanks in his prayers one Sabbath for the excellent harvest, began, as usual, "O Lord, we thank thee," etc., and went on to mention its abundance, and its safe ingathering; but feeling anxious to be quite candid and scrupulously truthful, added, "all except a few fields between this and Stonehaven, not worth mentioning." A Scotch preacher being sent to

officiate one Sunday at a country parish, was accommodated at night in the manse, in a very diminutive closet, instead of the usual best bed-room appropriated to strangers.

"Is this the bed-room?" he said, starting back in amazement.

"Deed ay, sir, this is the prophets' chammer."

"It maun be for the *minor* prophets, then," was the quiet reply.

Elders, no doubt, frequently partook of the original and humorous character of ministers and others, their cotemporaries; and amusing scenes must have passed, and good Scotch sayings been said, where they were concerned. Dr. Chalmers used to repeat one of these sayings of an elder with great delight. The circumstance took place in Lady Glenorchy's church, and Lady Glenorchy herself was one of the parties concerned. It seems her ladyship had, for some reason, taken offence at the proceedings of her kirk session, and a result of which was that she ceased putting in her usual liberal offering in the plate at the door. This had gone on for some time, till one

of the elders, of a less forbearing character than the others, took his turn at the plate. Lady Glenorchy, as usual, passed by without a contribution, but made a formal curtsey to the elder as she passed, and sailed majestically up the aisle. The good man was determined not to let her pass so easily. He quickly followed her up the passage, and urged the remonstrance, "My lady, gie us less o' yer mainers, and mair o' your siller."*

* The history of this noble lady since her death forms a striking illustration of the uncertainty of all earthly concerns. Wilhelmina Viscountess Glenorchy, during her lifetime, built and endowed a church for two ministers, who were provided with very handsome incomes. She died 17th July 1786, and was buried on the 24th July, aged 44. Her interment took place, by her own direction, in the church she had founded, immediately in front of the pulpit; and she fixed upon that spot as a place of security and safety, where her mortal remains might rest in peace till the morning of the resurrection. But alas for the uncertainty of all earthly plans and projects for the future!—the iron road came on its reckless course, and swept the church away. The site was required for the North British Railway, which passed directly over the spot where Lady Glenorchy had been

Of an eccentric and eloquent professor and divine of a northern Scottish university, there are numerous and extraordinary traditionary anecdotes. I have received an account of some of these anecdotes from the kind communication of an eminent Scottish clergyman, who was himself, in early days, his frequent hearer. The stories told of the strange observations and allusions which he introduced into his pulpit discourses, almost surpass belief. For many reasons, they are not suitable to the nature of this publication, still less could they be tolerated in any pulpit administration now, although familiar to his cotemporaries. The remarkable circumstance, however, connected with these eccentricities was, that he introduced them with the utmost gravity, and oftentimes after he had delivered them, pursued his subject with great earnestness and eloquence, as if he had said nothing uncommon. One saying of the Professor, how-

buried. Her remains were accordingly disinterred 24th December 1844; and the trustees of the church, not having yet erected a new one, deposited the body of their foundress in the vaults beneath St. John's Episcopal Church, and there they have rested for fifteen years.

ever, *out* of the pulpit, is too good to be omitted, and may be recorded without violation of propriety. He happened to meet at the house of a lawyer, whom he considered rather a man of *sharp* practice, and for whom he had no great favour, two of his own parishioners. The lawyer jocularly and ungraciously put the question: "Doctor, these are members of your flock; may I ask, do you look upon them as white sheep or as black sheep?" "I don't know," answered the Professor drily, "whether they are black or white sheep, but I know that if they are long here they are pretty sure to be *fleeced*." I have two characteristic and dry Scottish answers, traditional in the Lothian family, supplied to me by the present excellent and highly gifted young Marquis. Perhaps they would have had a more suitable place in our third division, but they can come in here. A Marquis of Lothian of a former generation, observed in his walk two workmen very busy with a ladder to reach a bell, on which they were keeping up a furious ringing. He asked what was the object of making such a din, to which the answer

was, "Oh, just, my lord, to ca' the workmen together." "Why, how many are there?" asked his lordship. "Ou, just Sandy and me," was the quiet rejoinder. The same Lord Lothian, looking about the garden, directed his gardener's attention to a particular plum-tree, charging him to be careful of the produce of that tree, and send the whole of it in marked, as it was of a very particular kind. "Ou," said the gardener, "I'll do that, my lord; there's just twa o' them."

There is a curious traditionary story current in some families regarding a celebrated Scottish nobleman, which, I am assured, is true, and farther, that it has never yet appeared in print. The story is therefore a Scottish reminiscence, and as such, deserves a place here. The Earl of Lauderdale was so ill as to cause great alarm to his friends, and perplexity to his physicians. One distressing symptom was a total absence of sleep, and the medical men declared their opinion, that without sleep being induced he could not recover. His son, a queer eccentric-looking boy, who was considered a kind of daft, and had little

attention paid to his education, was sitting under the table, and cried out, "Sen for that preaching man frae Livingstone, for he aye sleeps in the kirk." One of the doctors thought this hint worth attending to. The experiment of "getting a minister till him" succeeded, and sleep coming on he recovered. The Earl, out of gratitude for this benefit, took more notice of his son, paid attention to his education, and that boy became the Duke of Lauderdale, afterwards so famous or infamous in his country's history.

Now, when we linger over these old stories, we seem to live at another period, and in such reminiscences we converse with a generation different from our own. Changes are still going on around us. They have been going on for some time past. The changes are less striking as society advances, and our later years have less and less alterations to remark. Probably each generation will have fewer changes to record than the generation that preceded; still every one who has tolerably advanced in life must feel that, comparing its beginning and its close, he has witnessed two

epochs, and that he looks on a different world from one which he can remember. To elucidate this fact has been my present object, and in attempting this task I cannot but feel how trifling and unsatisfactory my remarks must seem to many who have a more enlarged and minute acquaintance with Scottish life and manners than I have. But I shall be encouraged to hope for a favourable, or at least an indulgent sentence upon these Reminiscences, if to any of my readers I shall have opened a fresh insight into the subject of social changes amongst us. Many causes operate in making change upon the habits and customs of mankind, and of late years such causes have been greatly multiplied in number and activity. In many persons, and in some who have not altogether lost their national partialities, there is a strong tendency to merge Scottish usages and Scottish expressions into the English forms, as being more correct and genteel. The facilities for moving, not merely from place to place in our own country, but from one country to another, the spread of knowledge and information

by means of periodical publications and newspapers, and the incredibly low prices at which literary works are produced, must have great effects. Then there is the improved taste in art, which, together with literature, has been taken up by young men who, fifty, sixty, seventy years ago, or more, would have known no such sources of interest, or indeed, who would have looked upon them as unmanly and effeminate. When first these pursuits were taken up by our Scottish young men, they excited in the north much amazement, and, I fear, contempt, as was evinced by a laird of the old school, who, the first time he saw a young man at the pianoforte, asked, with evident disgust, "Can the creature sew ony?" evidently putting the accomplishment of playing the pianoforte and the accomplishment of the needle in the same category. The greater facility of producing those articles of dress and furniture which tend to the comfort and embellishment of domestic life must have considerable influence. I have often thought how much effect on a people's habits might be traced to the single

circumstance of the cheap production of piano-fortes. The great and rapid advance in the higher department of music, both as to the cheap rate of hearing the compositions of the great masters and of possessing their works, must have influence upon the tastes and habits of a people. In the *Times* there appeared an advertisement of an edition of Handel's immortal work the Messiah coming out at twopence a number! Why, fifty years ago the very name of the work was known only to a few who were skilled to appreciate its high beauties. In connection, however, with this subject, I may notice here that a taste for that most interesting style of music, the pure Scottish, is in some quarters becoming a matter of reminiscence. Of reminiscence I mean so far as concerns the enthusiasm with which it was once esteemed and cultivated amongst us. I do not speak so much of the *songs* of Scotland, which can never lose their charm, although of them even some are growing fast out of the acquaintance of the younger members of society; but I refer more particularly to the reels and strathspeys which with many Scotch

persons have become nearly quite obsolete. When properly performed, it is a most animating and delightful strain—not of a refined or scientific class, but joyous and inspiriting. It has a peculiar character of its own, and requires to be performed with a particular and *spicy* dexterity of hand, whether for the bow or the keys. Accordingly, young ladies used to take lessons in it as a finish to their musical education. Such teaching would now, I fear, be treated with contempt by many of our modern fair ones. I recollect, at the beginning of the present century, my eldest sister, who was a good musician of the school of Pleyel, Kozeluch, Clementi, etc., having such lessons from Nathaniel Gow, a celebrated reel and strathspey performer. Nathaniel was the son of NEIL GOW, who was the most eminent performer and composer of the pure Scottish dancing music. At the close of the last century Neil's celebrity might be said to rival that of Burns; and Neil's strathspeys were on a par with the songs of Robby. But alas! that celebrity and popularity are becoming matters of

reminiscence with the few. In the rising generation the name has passed away. It is a pity. Even still, let a good strathspey performer begin to play, and every countenance brightens with animation. The fact I have alluded to, viz., the cheapness of great musical and literary works, speaks volumes for the changes that are going on, and in relation to such changes in national taste, it is both cause and effect. Taste encourages the production, and the increased production fosters the taste.

In consequence of these combined causes, families do not vegetate for years in one retired spot as they used to do; young men are encouraged to attain accomplishments and to have other sources of interest than the field or the bottle. Every one knows, or may know, everything that is going on through the whole world. There is a tendency in mankind to lose all that is peculiar, and in nations to part with all that distinguishes them from each other. We hear of wonderful changes in habits and customs where change seemed impossible. In India and Turkey

even, peculiarities and prejudices are fading away under the influence of time. It seems to me as if all men were gradually (slowly it may be, but gradually) approximating to a common type or form of manners and ways; oddities are sunk, prominences are rounded off, sharp features are polished, and all is becoming smooth and conventional. The remark, like the effect, is general, and extends to other countries as well as to our own. But as we have more recently had our peculiarities of dialect, oddity, and eccentricity, it becomes the more amusing to mark *our* participation in this change, because a period of fifty years shows here a greater contrast than the same period would show in most other localities.

In our reminiscences of many *changes*, which have taken place during fifty years in Scottish manners, it might form an interesting section to record some of the peculiarities which *remain*. I mean such peculiarities as yet linger amongst us, and still mark a difference in some of our social habits from those of England. Some Scottish usages die hard, and are found here and there for

the amusement of southern visitors. To give a few examples, persons still persist among us in calling the head of the family, or the host, the *landlord*, although he never charged his guests a halfpenny for the hospitality he exercises. In games, golf and curling mark the national character—cricket is but an exotic, and does not take root. We still call our reception rooms "*public* rooms," although never used for any but domestic purposes. Military rank attached to ladies is a peculiarity, as we speak of Mrs. Captain Scott, Mrs. Major Smith. On the occasion of a death, we persist in sending circular notices to all the relatives, whether they know of it or not—a custom which, together with men wearing weepers at funeral solemnities, is unknown in England. Announcing a married lady's death under her maiden name must seem strange to English ears—as, for example, we read of the demise of Jane Dixon, spouse of Thomas Morison. Scottish cookery retains its ground, and hotch-potch, minced collops, sheep's heads singed, and occasionally haggis, are still marked peculiarities of the Scottish

table. These social differences linger amongst us. But stronger points are worn away, eccentricities and oddities such as existed once will not do now. One does not see why eccentricity should be more developed in one age than in another, but we cannot avoid the conclusion that the day for real oddities is no more. Professors of colleges are those in whom one least expects it—grave and learned characters, and yet such *have* been in former times. We can scarcely now imagine such Professors as we read of in a past generation. Take the case of no less distinguished a person than Adam Smith, author of the "Wealth of Nations," who went about the streets talking and laughing to himself in such a manner as to make the market women think he was deranged; and he told of one himself who ejaculated as he passed, "Hech, sirs, and he is weel pat on, too!" expressing surprise that a decided lunatic, who from his dress appeared to be a gentleman, should be permitted to walk abroad. Professors still have their crotchets like other people; but we can scarcely conceive a professor of our day coming out like Adam Smith to have fish-

wives making such observations on his demeanour. Of these changes there are many which the dignified muse of history will scarcely condescend to record or notice. Perhaps some changes are better described in idle gossip like this than by the historic page; and this made me remark, as an introduction to the record of these anecdotes, that personal recollections and reminiscences might be extremely valuable in describing those lighter variations of society which do not come properly within the scope of history. Every one at all advanced in life could convey some vivid impressions of his early days, and thus form for the younger generation a link between themselves and a past age. As an example of such communication, I would adduce the early portion of Lord Cockburn's book, and the curious account he gives of the ludicrous and absurd system of toasts and sentiments which sixty years ago was a necessary evil of the table. Some of these domestic customs which tyranically, and one would think most uncomfortably, ruled society, and to which the fathers and grandfathers

of many of us used to bear witness, seem now almost too strange to be believed; as for example, at a ball, the partners were never changed the whole evening. To a young lady, therefore, the first request for her hand in the dance was a very serious matter. An octogenarian friend of mine, in good health and spirits (long may he enjoy them!) has told me of his dress at the dancing-school balls, and which mark a considerable change of costume in a lifetime. A pearl grey coat, nearly white; white waistcoat; yellow or canary shorts, with large bunches of ribbon at the knee of the same colour; blue silk stockings; pumps, with large bows of ribbon. Cocked hats then prevailed even amongst juvenile attendants. Then, again, imagine the dire necessity of drinking the health of every mortal at table every time you received a glass of wine or called for beer, and still worse, the irksome hospitality of being pressed to eat, urged to take a fresh supply of victuals when you had already eaten more than nature required, in deference to the misplaced kindness of the host or hostess, nay,

perhaps, of having an additional wing of a chicken smuggled on your plate when you were for a moment looking another way. I have heard old people remark that they can remember the custom of the host saluting all lady-guests on their arrival under his roof. I regret that we have not more reminiscences prepared *for the purpose* of elucidating such changes in social customs and domestic usages as these. Much might be done by one person who would give himself to the work; for it is curious to think how far back an attentive observer and chronicler who has passed middle age, might retrace old forgotten ways, and bring traditional knowledge to the light. Take my own case for example. At eight years of age I was consigned to the care of my grand-uncle, who died, at the age of ninety-one, in 1806. He was born in 1715, so that I could have derived impressions from him of events one hundred and twenty-five years ago or upwards from the present time. Then take *his* traditionary and personal communication, and he could tell of a man and of what a man told him who had himself witnessed

the execution of Charles I. This at first sight seems somewhat startling, but it will be quite evident on a moment's reflection. My uncle, at the age of fifteen, being then a younger son, was placed in a mercantile house in London; that being in the year 1730, and one of the partners being an aged man, eighty-nine years of age, would easily allow him to have been eight years old when his father took him to witness that fearful scene at Whitehall in 1649. He could have told my uncle, therefore, from personal recollection, minutiæ of details which would easily escape the pen of the historian. I would not be misunderstood as if at all implying that I had actually such an opportunity of learning traditionary Scottish customs or anecdotes from this venerable relative, because, in fact, I learnt nothing. But I mean to show how much of such information *might* have been gained and handed down if parties had been observant and communicative. A great deal of such knowledge has been conveyed by Sir Walter Scott through his novels. Still we desiderate more conversational traditions of personal recollection of past times.

In all these details regarding the changes which many now living have noticed to have taken place in our customs and habits of society in Scotland, this question must always occur to the thoughtful and serious mind, Are the changes which have been observed for *good?* Is the world a better world than that which we can remember? On some important points changes have been noticed in the upper classes of Scottish society, which unquestionably are improvements. For example, the greater attention paid to attendance upon public worship,—the disappearance of profane swearing and of excess in drinking. But then the painful questions arise, Are such beneficial changes *general* through the whole body of our countrymen? may not the vices and follies of one grade of society have found a refuge in those that are of a lower class? may not new faults have taken their place where older faults have been abandoned? Of this we are quite sure, no lover of his country can fail to entertain the anxious

wish, that the change we noticed in regard to drinking and swearing were universal, and that we had some evidence of its being extended through *all* classes of society. We ought certainly to feel grateful when we reflect that in many instances which we have noticed, the ways and customs of society are much improved in common sense, in decency, in delicacy, and refinement. There are certain modes of life, certain expressions, eccentricity of conduct, coarseness of speech, books and plays, which were in vogue amongst us, even fifty or sixty years ago, which would not be tolerated in society at the present time. We cannot illustrate this in a more satisfactory manner than by reference to the acknowledgment of a very interesting and charming old lady, who died so lately as 1823. In 1821, Mrs. Keith of Ravelstone, grand-aunt of Sir Walter Scott, thus writes in returning to him the work of a female novelist, which she had borrowed from him out of curiosity, and to remind her of "auld lang syne:" "Is it not a very odd thing that I, an old woman of eighty and upwards,

sitting alone, feel myself ashamed to read a book which, sixty years ago, I have heard read aloud for the amusement of large circles, consisting of the first and most creditable society in London ?" There can be no doubt that at the time referred to by Mrs. Keith, Tristram Shandy,* Tom Jones, Humphrey Clinker, etc., were on the drawing-room tables of ladies whose grandchildren or great-grandchildren never saw them, or would not acknowledge it if they had seen them. But authors not inferior to Sterne, Fielding, or Smollet, are now popular, and who can describe the scenes of human life with as much force and humour, and yet there is nothing in their pages which need

* Sterne, in one of his letters, describes his reading Tristram Shandy to his wife and daughter — his daughter copying from his dictation, and Mrs. Sterne sitting by and listening whilst she worked. In the life of Sterne, it is recorded that he used to carry about in his pocket a volume of the same work, and read it aloud when he went into company. Admirable reading for the church dignitary, the prebendary of York ! How well adapted to the hours of social intercourse with friends ! How fitted for domestic seclusion with his family ! !

offend the taste of the most refined, or shock the feelings of the most pure. This is a change where there is also great improvement. It indicates not merely a better moral perception in authors themselves, but it is itself a homage to the improved spirit of the age. We will hope that, with an improved exterior, there is improvement in society within. If the feelings shrink from what is coarse in expression, we may hope that vice has, in some sort, lost attraction. At any rate, from what we discern around us, we hope favourably for the general improvement of mankind, and of our own beloved country in particular. If Scotland, in parting with her rich and racy dialect, her odd and eccentric characters, is to lose something in quaint humour and good stories, we will hope she may grow and strengthen in *better* things—good as those are which she loses. However this may be, I feel quite assured that the examples which I have now given of Scottish expressions, Scottish modes and habits of life, and Scottish anecdotes, which belong in a great measure to the past, and yet which are remembered

as having a place in the present century, must carry conviction that great changes have taken place in the Scottish social circle. There were some things belonging to our country which we must all have desired should be changed. There were others which we could only see changed with regret and sorrow. The hardy and simple habits of Scotsmen of many past generations,—their industry, economy, and integrity, which made them take so high a place in the estimation and the confidence of the people amongst whom they dwelt in all countries of the world. The intelligence and superior education of her mechanics and her peasantry, combined with a strict moral and religious demeanour, fully justified the praise of Burns when he described the humble, though sublime piety of the "Cottar's Saturday Night," and we can well appreciate the testimony which he bore to the hallowed power and sacred influences of the devotional exercises of his boyhood's home, when he penned the immortal words :—

"From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad."

These things we hope and trust, under the Divine blessing, will never change, except to increase, and will never become a question of reminiscences for the past. If Scotland has lost much of the quaint and original character of former lawyers, lairds, and old ladies, much of the pungent wit and dry humour of sayings in her native dialect, she can afford to sustain the loss if she gain in refinement, and lose not the more solid qualities and more valuable characteristics by which she has been distinguished. If peculiarities of former days are partially becoming obsolete, let them at least be preserved. Let our younger contemporaries, let those who are to come, know something of them from history, as we elders have known something of them from experience. The humour and the point cannot all be lost in their being recorded, although they may lose much. I still hope to see this carried on farther by others, as I am convinced great additions could be made to these reminiscences, which I have endeavoured

to preserve. Changes of this nature in the habits and language of a nation are extremely interesting, and it is most desirable that they should be recorded as well as those greater changes and revolutions which it is the more immediate object of history to enrol amongst her annals. And, whether the changes of which we are now treating mark the deterioration or improvement of manners, useful lessons and important moral conconclusions may be drawn from the narrative in both cases. Causes are at work which must yet produce still greater changes, and it is impossible to foresee what will be the future picture of Scottish life, as it will probably be now becoming every year less and less distinguished from the rest of the world. If we shall have little to mark our national peculiarities in the time to come, we cannot be deprived of our reminiscences of the *past*. As a Scotchman I am proud of the prestige which belong to us *as* a nation. I am interested in everything which is Scottish. I consider it an honour to have been born a Scotchman; and one fain excuse I have to offer for

entertaining a proud feeling on the subject, one proof I can adduce, that a Scottish lineage is considered a legitimate source of self-congratulation, and that is the fact that I never in my life knew an English or Irish family with Scottish relations, where the members did not refer with much complacency to such national connection. I cherish fondly all Scottish associations. I am grieved to see our nationality fading away. I confess to a strong feeling of regret and indignation when I see the indifference shewn by the government (whatever party be in power) towards the few memorials of that nationality that remain. Witness the condition of Edinburgh Castle, Holyrood Chapel and Palace, etc., etc., and the neglect shewn regarding their preservation and restoration. But I have done. I seem to linger over these REMINISCENCES, which now belong to a past national and social history with mingled feelings of regret and pleasure. I have indeed, in collecting these materials, recalled many scenes which partake of that mixed character which belongs to all the concerns of human

life. I believe that so long as I have life and any degree of mental energy remaining, I shall in memory fondly dwell on Scottish names and Scottish associations that are *past;* and in looking onwards to *future* times, I would realise the wish for a virtuous populace poured forth in the prayer of the " patriot bard :"—

" O Scotia ! my dear, my native soil !
For whom my warmest wish to heaven is sent;
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content."

In such wishes let all join in heart and tongue. In such feelings let our religious and political differences be forgotten. Let all the various names and forms of church government and church services merge for once into the love of country, so that every son and daughter of Caledonia shall cordially join in those beautiful words of the Scottish paraphrase, which have so often risen with acceptance from the lips of crowded congregations — whether assembled on the Sabbath day in the midst of populous cities,

in the retired pastoral districts of the country, or in the wild glens of the Highlands :—

"O God of Bethel! by whose hand
Thy people still are fed;
Who through this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led:
Our vows, our prayers, we now present
Before thy throne of grace:
God of our fathers! be the God
Of their succeeding race."

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